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ARTSPRAXIS

Emphasizing critical analysis of the arts in society.

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ArtsPraxis Volume 8, Issue 1 looked to engage members of the global Educational Theatre community in dialogue around current research and practice. This call for papers was released in conjunction with the publication of ArtsPraxis Volume 7, Issues 2a and 2b. The submission deadline for Volume 8, Issue 1 was January 15, 2021.

Submissions fell under one of the following categories:

- Drama in Education (i.e., studies in drama/theatre curriculum, special education, integrated arts, assessment and evaluation)
- Applied Theatre (i.e., studies in community-based theatre, theatre of the oppressed, the teaching artist, diversity and inclusion)
- Theatre for Young Audiences and Play Production (i.e., studies in acting, directing, dramaturgy, playwriting, dramatic literature, theatre technology, arts-based research methodologies)

Key questions the Issue was to address included:

Drama in Education

- How and why do we teach drama and theatre in schools and community settings?
- How do the roles and responsibilities of the teaching artist differ from those of the classroom teacher (primary, secondary or higher education)?
- What is the contemporary role of drama and theatre in arts education?
- How do we prepare future theatre artists and educators in the 21st century?
- What are innovative ways of devising original works and/or teaching theatre using various aesthetic forms, media, and/or technology?
- To what extent can the study of global theatre forms impact students' learning?
- To what extent should we distinguish theatre-making from drama as a learning medium?
- How can integrated-arts curricula facilitate teaching, learning and presenting the craft of

theatre?
- How do we assess students' aesthetic understanding and awareness?
- What research supports the potential of drama as a learning medium?
- How do drama and theatre make connections across curricular content areas and beyond schools?
- How do drama and theatre education contribute to lifelong learning?
- What role do drama and theatre play in community agencies?

Applied Theatre
- How can drama provide a forum to explore ideas?
- What are innovative strategies for using drama to stimulate dialogue, interaction and change?
- How is theatre being used to rehabilitate people in prisons, health facilities, and elsewhere?
- How do we prepare future artists/educators for work in applied theatre?
- What ethical questions should the artist/educator consider in their work?
- In what ways are aesthetics important in applied theatre? How do we negotiate a commitment to both the process and product of applied theatre work?
- How do artist/educators assess participants' understandings in an applied theatre project?
- What are the major tensions in the field and how are these being addressed?
- To what extent has recent research on affect influenced community-based praxis?

Theatre for Young Audiences/Play Production
- Theatre for young audiences is an international movement and the borders are breaking down so how do we present and respond to work from other countries?
- Who exactly are our new audiences—who are we talking to?
- Are we as brave as we think we are? How does what we think we should do relate to what we want to do as artists?
- Is the writer at the heart of future theatre creation? What has happened to dramaturgy in the brave new world of immersive, experiential, visual/physical theatre?
- Theatre for Young Audiences has always been in the forefront of theatrical innovation. So what is next?
- What have we learned about nurturing the artist of the future—playwriting, theatre-making, performance?
- How do artists establish rigorous, intentional new works development processes that are innovative and sustainable?
- How does accountability serve the stakeholders in a new works development process?
- How do we define and measure success in theatre for young audiences?

We encouraged article submissions from interdisciplinary artists, educators, and scholars. Our goal was to motivate a dialogue among a wide variety of practitioners and researchers that will enrich the development of educational theatre in the coming years.

Call for Papers
Papers were to be no longer than 4,000 words, had to be accompanied by a 200 word abstract and 100 word biographies for the author(s), and conformed to APA style manual.

Reviewing Procedures
Each article was sent to two members of the editorial board. They provides advice on the following:

- Whether the article should be published with no revisions/with revisions.
- The contribution the article makes to the arts community.
- Specific recommendations to the author about improving the article.
- Other publishing outlets if the article is considered unacceptable.

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Cover image from from NYU's Program in Educational Theatre production of *Re-Writing the Declaration* directed in 2020 by Quenna Lené Barrett. Original artwork created by Naimah Thomas.

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Editorial: Into the Traumaverse

JONATHAN P. JONES
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

HOW ARE YOU DOING?

If we've learned anything this past year, we should now know that it is a necessity to greet one another with a check-in. I know well that some of you have been doing this as part of your practice for a long time, but it has caught fire of late. And why? Because many of us have been isolated in ways we hadn't been before and as a result, we have seized upon the all-too-infrequent moments of interpersonal connection as they have taken on a greater significance than they had before. And while we employed a number of new practices this past year, as the pandemic may begin to wane, we must ask which of these new practices will go by the wayside? To that question, I implore you to keep this check-in practice around. And don't just give it lip-service—ask with full sincerity—and to that, I ask again: *how are you doing?*

Close your eyes. Soak in this moment. Breathe.

From my vantage point, I sit at the precipice. What awaits us? I am excited. Terrified. Optimistic. Anxious. Ready. As I juggle all the feelings that envelope me in this moment in time, I make space to

acknowledge you and what you may be going through. I pause, I breathe, and I offer a warning: our work is challenging—as is the writing that follows. So if you're feeling overwhelmed in this moment, take a break. Rejoin us when you are ready—we'll be here to welcome you upon your return.

THE PRIVILEGE

On a hot summer evening in the year 2000, I was having a deep dive with a good friend, as 21 year-olds are want to do. We spoke about life—the future—who we were—who we aspired to be. My white, cisgender, male, economically privileged, gay friend said to me, "You have no idea how lucky you are. When you walk into a room, everyone knows that you're gay. It's probably always been that way for you—you open your mouth and a purse drops out. But it's much harder for me. You have no idea what it's like for everyone to believe that you're straight which forces you to have to come out again and again and again."

I gather some of you may be familiar with this episode of the oppression olympics. Generally, it is a losing game to engage in these conversations, but I stepped up to plate nonetheless. Me. Black, cisgender, male, economically disadvantaged, and gay.

"Do you have any idea how difficult it is to face harassment every time you walk into a public space?" I replied. "There were less frequent occurrences when I was younger, but from the start of eighth grade until I graduated high school, there it was—everyday—without cease. Five years. Every day. Inescapable. And yet, I wasn't out. So I couldn't talk about it. I couldn't acknowledge it. Not at home. Not at church youth group. Not anywhere—to no one—ever. And so I isolated myself in whatever way I could—because I was terrified that what they said might be true. And worse, that my family would find out. I'm sure your fear and shame were real, but do you have any idea what a privilege it is to pass for straight?"

This was not a winning tactic on my part—there really is nothing to be said when someone comes at you with these kinds of tactless missives except, perhaps, "You should think about what you just said before we continue." But then, who has the presence of mind to say that in the moment? Well, I didn't. And instead, I engaged. I look back

now in wonder—why was I friends with this person? This person who used to call me, “Big and Black”—not to describe my appearance, but as his self-selected nickname for me. As I am prone to making faces from time to time, this person who used to seize upon those moments to say, “There’s that monkey face again.”

To be young. To tolerate the intolerable out of habit—out of self-loathing—out of desperation—out of internalized racism and homophobia—out of necessity. We learn to tolerate the intolerable in order to cope. To dissociate. To get by.

Living in Role

I suffered many indignities as a child. Many traumas. And popular culture in the 1980s and 90s burned into my subconscious that these indignities and traumas had marked me as broken and in desperate need of therapy in order to fix me. So I arrived at college as an undergraduate expecting to fall into the welcoming arms of therapy (offered through the student health center) that would unwind all that I had suffered and allow me to emerge anew—untouched—unscarred. But it didn’t pan out that way. As I unburdened myself in my first therapy session in 1997, I remember bringing an extended monologue to a close by saying, “And there it is.” And indeed, there it was. The therapist was silent for a moment—which seemed like an eternity—and then she said, “And what makes you think your experience has left you so damaged? Here you are—unemotional—unscathed—it seems to me you’ve managed to cope just fine.”

Hmm.

I’m not quite sure that’s not how an initial visit is supposed to unfold, but I had entered the space with the wrong frame of mind—verbalizing, “Fix me,” externalizes what needs to be an internal process. Process—that’s what I actually needed—to process what I had experienced. To process what I thought and felt about those experiences. To process the import they had in who I was and who I was becoming. But something in the way that this therapist closed off the experience and didn’t invite a process turned me off from that experience. And in failing to identify another outlet wherein I could process those experiences, I found myself a few years later recast as “Big and Black” and suffered a new series of indignities.

I had created a sense of self—a role, if you will, that had less to do with the totality of my authentic self than it did with finding a way to compartmentalize these traumas I'd experienced. In his writing about role theory, drama therapy pioneer Robert Landy conceived of role as, "persona rather than person, character rather than full-blown human being, part rather than whole" (1991, p. 29). I was 'victim.' I was 'young and Black in America.' I was 'child of an alcoholic.' I was 'physically abused.' I was 'gay.' Many roles. But rather than being subsumed by any one of these signifiers, I was most drawn to 'damaged' and 'different.' I had experienced trauma—and I thought that meant I should be in role as 'traumatized.' What was I to make of this?

Giving Voice

A few years later, I collaborated on a theatre in education workshop at the NYU LGBT Center. The workshop was called *Voices* and in it, my colleagues and I had prepared an ethnodrama about our experiences growing up gay in the U.S. in the 1980s and 90s. Following the presentation, the audience was invited to participate in some drama activities to share about their own experiences in so far as the sharing reflected upon aspects of their lived experience that would otherwise go unvoiced—be that out of self-loathing, desperation, internalized racism and homophobia, necessity, or other (perhaps, dear reader, you're sensing a theme?). We were inviting our participants to join us in what I would now describe as *self-liberation*. Here's an excerpt from the performance text:

> JONATHAN
> In ninth grade, I went to public school and the shit really hit the fan. I was lost in the 350 people in my grade, let alone the 1,400 students in the school. However, it didn't take long for me to be known pretty much school-wide as...
>
> OTHERS
> That Gay Kid with Green Hair
>
> JONATHAN
> ...after a botched Halloween experiment involving food coloring. Having people call out...

OTHERS
...Fag!

JONATHAN
...was interesting. I ignored it. I mean, I thought that was the best thing.

(enter MR. CORCOS at left)

MR. CORCOS
Alright, students. The bell has rung. Let's find a seat.

JONATHAN
In Spanish class, though, it got personal. This kid (whose name I have thankfully no memory of) harassed me literally every day that he was there. I sat in the first row, first seat. He sat in the third row, first seat. He would rest his head on his hand facing me and for forty minutes every day he would question me...

THIS KID
Do you know that you're gay?

(beat)

What's it like to take it up the ass?

(beat)

Don't you know that being gay is wrong?

(beat)

You probably have AIDS. Why do I have to sit in class with someone with AIDS?

(beat)

What's wrong? Ain't you got nothing to say? Fucking faggot.

JONATHAN
...Every day. For the entire year. My teacher, Mr. Corcos, would at times say:

MR. CORCOS
You, third row, first seat, be quiet.

JONATHAN
Or

MR. CORCOS
You, third row, first seat, go to the office.

JONATHAN
But for the most part, it would just go on.

THIS KID
Fucking faggot.

JONATHAN
One of the kids from my elementary school was also in the class. He sat right behind me.

ONE OF THE KIDS
Why don't you defend yourself? Why do you let him talk to you that way?

JONATHAN
I don't need to stoop to his level, I replied.

That's pretty much how I always acted then: very tough skin and hard to get through to. It didn't affect me. I saw high school as a necessary evil (gym class too). Something that I had to suffer through, but no matter how awful, it was only four years. So who cares what they say? Who cares what they think? All that matters is what *I* think. (Jones, 2003)

A good friend (different friend; an actual good friend) attended the workshop. He participated in the activities and the sharing, as a good

friend ought to do. Afterwards, he said to me, “But I don’t understand why you’re all complaining. Bad things happen to people all the time. What’s the point of dwelling on it?”

I was incredibly surprised and frustrated by this response. In preparing the workshop, my colleagues and I spoke at length about how vital this work was going to be—what a *gift* we were giving our participants—this opportunity to speak, share, and commune.

Surprised—frustrated—these emotions can snowball if unchecked, so it wasn’t long before I was enraged. “Do you have any idea what a privilege it is to not be traumatized?” I shouted.

I didn’t shout.

I could have shouted.

At another time, maybe I *would* have shouted.

But in that moment, in spite of having all the feels, I kept that one to myself.

Because I learned something there—I was, in fact, *different*. I’d had a different experience in my life. And that wasn’t wrong. That wasn’t stigmatizing. That was just *different*. And unlike the oppression olympics episode I articulated earlier, the differentiation here was meaningful. The trauma I had experienced impacted me in a way that was neither unique nor universal—but working through it and processing it this way was meaningful to me and my colleagues. We shared our traumatic experiences, made a decision to process them together, and invited participants to do the same. But a participant who has read and understood the scope and purpose of an event has consented to a different experience than your well-meaning friend who showed up to support you. And assuming that though that friend may have had similar experiences in their life, it didn’t necessarily mean that they experienced that as trauma—and even if they did, it didn’t mean they were interested in processing it in the same way that you did. My friend may have already processed his trauma, wasn’t ready to process it, didn't need to process it, or maybe he was still in it—and as survivor-activist Zerlina Maxwell points out regularly on her radio show, *Signal Boost*, you can’t process trauma while you’re in it.

Having had that experience is part of why I write today, at an extraordinary moment where I see a bright flashing light telling me: what if, in this extraordinary moment, everyone (like, really *every* one) has been traumatized? And if everyone has been traumatized, how will we facilitate meaningful drama work in spaces where folks may not

have consciously decided to process that trauma—which may be inescapably present for everyone to see?

WHAT IS TRAUMA?

In order to identify a path forward, it may be helpful for me to back up a few paces. Trauma has come to the fore of popular consciousness, and as is often the case, identifying shared definitions of terms will help us proceed. According to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5th Edition (DSM-5), trauma is defined as:

> exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence -
>
> - Directly experiencing the traumatic event(s).
> - Witnessing, in person, the event(s) as it occurred to others.
> - Learning that the event(s) occurred to a close family member or close friend. Note: In cases of actual or threatened death of a family member or friend, the event(s) must have been violent or accidental.
> - Experiencing repeated or extreme exposure to aversive details of the traumatic event(s) (e.g., first responders collecting human remains, police officers repeatedly exposed to details of child abuse).
>
> Note: This does not apply to exposure through electronic media, television, movies, or pictures, unless this exposure is work related. (American Psychiatric Association, 2013)

Collectively, life in the pandemic has been traumatic. For individuals, given this definition, we can see that some may have escaped this experience better than others in so far as they might feel that the pandemic was something on the news and social media—something real, but distant—or something manufactured and a hoax. But even in those circumstances—for those who may have felt an indirect experience of the pandemic, many have lived through some of the inescapable reminders at least some of the time—some experience of social distancing, mask mandates, school closures, cancelation of events, and/or travel bans. Who among us is unscathed?

This widespread phenomenon of trauma is not unprecedented—at least not for many in the U.S. According to a 2013 infographic on how to manage stress, the National Council for Behavioral Health indicated, "70% of adults in the U.S. have experienced some type of traumatic event at least once in their lives. That's 223.4 million people." Among the traumatic experiences they considered were:

- childhood abuse or neglect
- physical, emotional, or sexual abuse
- accidents and natural disasters
- witnessing acts of violence
- cultural, intergenerational and historical trauma
- grief and loss
- medical interventions
    - war and other forms of violence (National Council for Behavioral Health, 2013)

Last year, in my editorial, I Can't Breathe, I pointed to the "pandemic within a pandemic" that Maya Wiley spoke about: the COVID-19 pandemic within the pandemic of intergenerational and structural racism in the U.S. (Jones, 2020, p. xii), and we know that hasn't gone away. Compound that with the individual trauma folks experience just living their lives—and the indignity of social traumas—the bigotry, hatred, oppression—all the -isms that we unfortunately know too well, and as a society, we are subsumed in intersecting traumas. For those who might not have heard me the first time: *who among us is unscathed?*

So what does that look like? As I write, just this week they have lifted all COVID restrictions in New York—so as some of us come out of this hibernation, what is this world we are stepping into? What is this traumaverse? And how do we navigate our roles within what may be uncharted waters?

WHAT MIGHT WE ENCOUNTER IN THIS TRAUMAVERSE?

Returning to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5th Edition (DSM-5), there are certain responses and behaviors we might anticipate in the traumaverse. According to the DSM-5:

> Psychological distress following exposure to a traumatic or stressful event is quite variable. In some cases, symptoms can be well understood within an anxiety—or fear-based context. It is clear, however, that many individuals who have been exposed to a traumatic or stressful event exhibit a phenotype in which, rather than anxiety—or fear-based symptoms, the most prominent clinical characteristics are anhedonic and dysphoric symptoms, externalizing angry and aggressive symptoms, or dissociative symptoms. (American Psychiatric Association, 2013)

Let's unpack some of the clinical characteristics in order to be perfectly clear about how these symptoms may manifest. From the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* (2021), here are some definitions:

> anhedonia – a psychological condition characterized by inability to experience pleasure in normally pleasurable acts
>
> dysphoric – very unhappy, uneasy, or dissatisfied
>
> dissociation – the separation of whole segments of the personality (as in multiple personality disorder) or of discrete mental processes (as in the schizophrenias) from the mainstream of consciousness or of behavior

Few among us are clinical therapists, so for those of us who are not, we must avoid attempts to diagnose conditions, label, or attempt to 'treat' our participants or students. That's not why we're there, it's not what they've agreed to, and even if they were to agree to it—it's not our role. But it would be equally inappropriate to ignore the signs and symptoms if/when we encounter them given the regularity with which we might see our participants or students and also the reality that the very nature of educational drama work invites sharing of our experiences.

The clinical conditions mentioned in the DSM-5 capture only a few of the possible symptoms of trauma. As identified by the National Council for Behavioral Health, some additional symptoms of trauma include:

- headaches, backaches, stomachaches, etc.

- sudden sweating and/or heart palpitations
- changes in sleep patterns and appetite
- constipation or diarrhea
- easily startled by noises or unexpected touch
- more susceptible to colds and illnesses
- increased use of alcohol or drugs and/or overeating
- fear, depression, anxiety
- outbursts of anger or rage
- emotional swings
- tendency to isolate oneself or feelings of detachment
- difficulty trusting
- self-blame, survivor-guilt, or shame
- diminished interest in everyday activities (2013)

Given the likelihood that we will encounter these symptoms in our practice, we must anticipate them. In the traumaverse, we should expect these symptoms to manifest—and when they do, respond. Here are some practices for how to do so:

- Check-in, just as I did at the outset of this editorial.
- Provide an agenda upfront so everyone is clear and in agreement about how your workshop, lesson, rehearsal, or activity will proceed—and give folks the opportunity to opt out if they need it.
- Research local support services that you can refer folks to if the situation warrants—be they school-based services or community-based social services.
- Many practitioners have contributed critical analysis of their trauma-informed drama methods. Seek out their writing, learn from it, adapt for your population, and employ an ethic of care that is open, welcoming, and supportive.

Professor and activist Shawn Ginwright proposes that trauma-informed practice insufficiently addresses folks' needs because it centers their traumatic experiences (similar to what I conveyed earlier about my focusing on discrete roles rather than a more holistic view of my experiences) rather than their overall well-being. Ginwright proposes healing centered engagement instead, which:

> is akin to the South African term ‘Ubuntu’ meaning that humanness is found through our interdependence, collective engagement and service to others. Additionally, healing centered engagement offers an asset driven approach aimed at the holistic restoration of young peoples’ well-being. The healing centered approach comes from the idea that people are not harmed in a vacuum, and well-being comes from participating in transforming the root causes of the harm within institutions. Healing centered engagement also advances the move to ‘strengths-based’ care and away from the deficit based mental health models that drives therapeutic interventions. (2018)

We can do this.

COPING IN THE TRAUMAVERSE

As we engage in this new normal, we must remember to tend to our own needs. Ask yourself, “How am *I* doing?” You can’t support others if you haven’t yet supported yourself—and how might you do that? According to the National Council for Behavioral Health, helpful coping strategies for managing trauma include:

- acknowledging that you have been through traumatic events
- connect with others, especially those who may have shared the stressful event or experience other trauma
- exercise
- relax
- take up music, art, or other diversions
- commit to something personally meaningful and important every day
- write about your experience for yourself or to share with others. (2013)

As I mentioned earlier, I’m still processing my trauma. And how do I process? I talk about it. All of it. I write. I sing. I dance. I run. I create. I keep going.

At the close of the spring semester, the Program in Educational Theatre at NYU Steinhardt hosted an end-of-year toast on Zoom. The

faculty gave awards to several of our outstanding soon-to-be-graduates, we reflected on our many collective accomplishments over the course of the year, and made announcements about projects and programs to come. We wanted the event to be forward-looking, festive, and fun, so we decided to end the event with a brief but enthusiastic dance party—and I would initiate that send-off.

Whenever an ending looms, I am reminded that as one thing ends, another begins. So I thought about what I might say that evening after what has been a truly extraordinary year—in both the worst and best possible ways. A year in which I lost so much (Jones, 2020)—we lost so much—and yet we gained so very much. This spring, I began each session of one of my courses with a sharing of some moment of joy that had occurred in the time since we'd last been together. Christina Greer, Associate Professor of Political Science at Fordham University, described this practice as providing an opportunity for instructors to connect with their students' humanity (2021). The practice also aligns with Ginwright (2018), as this centering of joy in the midst of a traumatic experience reminds us that no matter the struggle, it is those moments of joy that carry us through. Joy is there—in spite of the loneliness—the isolation—the insurrection—the illness—the death—the grief—the depression—the trauma—the 2020/2021 of it all—somehow, there is joy.

And as we know, it is in these dichotomies where we often live and struggle and suffer great pains to survive—and thrive. I unmuted my microphone when the moment arrived and offered this, "When we look back on this time in our lives, we will tell a story of resilience." Resilience is a story we rarely tell ourselves (though, perhaps we should). Resilience is a story we usually tell others—to inspire—that they too might liberate their hearts and minds—to persevere—to overcome. I turned the music on. And in my own space, I turned it up loud. And for the first time in more than a year of existing on Zoom, I dissociated from the camera—from the electronic gaze that had enraptured me for so very long. I didn't hear the ping of the chat. I disregarded the screen altogether. Doing well by my students is a driving force behind my work—so, in some ways, the dance was for them. But really, I danced for me. And in the traumaverse, that's not half bad.

IN THIS ISSUE

In this issue, our contributors have reflected on their diverse practices, many of which fall under or draw upon trauma-informed and healing centered practices. In *Divided We Stand,* **Carmen Meyers** uses verbatim documentary theatre to investigate how women in the U.S. negotiated and maintained their identities and relationships in today's climate of political polarization. **Taiwo Afolabi** focuses on his performance in an applied theatre project with refugees, immigrants, and international students in Victoria, British Columbia to explore how his migratory and mobility experiences shape his identity and in turn reveal expression in his artistic practice.

In her narrative of practice, **Kaitlin O.K. Jaskolski** highlights the methods used to facilitate, assess and stratify learning outcomes in order to create a culture of inclusion as illustrated through case studies on devising and the performance of *Aesop's Idols* at Westside Inclusive Theatre Company in Houston, Texas. **Lea Ticozzi** reviews her staging of Neil Simon's *The Gingerbread Lady* with young people at a high school in Switzerland. The students embodied physical, intellectual and emotional experiences by staging characters who address sexist, LGBTQ, and racial issues as illuminated through their written reflections. **Amanda Claudia Wager** and **Sara Schroeter** explore their experiences as drama-in-education professors in Canada teaching educators how to create and facilitate process drama and call for artists and educators to be more thoughtful in approaching the creation and facilitation of process drama, especially when teaching people with different subjectivities and positionalities.

To illustrate active learning methods, U.S. based teacher-educator **Rosalind M. Flynn** presents a lesson sequence and resources for teaching theatre history. In Santiago, Chile, theatre practitioner **Moira Fortin** works through and into the intersections between illustration and theatre, as she explores her collaboration with visual artist and illustrator Carolina Schütte González as they created a graphic transposition of Ibsen's *A Doll's House*. **Dawn Ingleson** probes her use of conflict resolution models at a Primary School Federation in London, UK. Ingleson implements nonviolent communication, systems theory, and philosophy for children to create a simultaneous community of inquiry and practice using versions of forum theatre and process drama via a journey of immersive practice.

Finally, drawing the threads explored in this issue together, **Mary-Rose McLaren** examines the ways in which play, image theatre, and improvisation are used to invite students to explore their individual and collective narratives in order to develop professional identity and personal agency by building an ethnodrama in a Higher Education classroom.

LOOKING AHEAD

Our next issue (Volume 8, Issue 2) will focus on articles under our general headings (drama in education, applied theatre, and theatre for young audiences) looking to engage members of the Educational Theatre field who want to contribute to the ongoing dialogue. That issue will publish in early 2022. Thereafter, look to the Program in Educational Theatre at NYU for the 2022 Forum on Humanities and the Arts and the Verbatim Performance Lab.

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AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Jonathan P. Jones, PhD is a graduate from the Program in Educational Theatre at New York University, where he earned both an M.A. and a Ph.D. He conducted his doctoral field research in fall 2013 and in spring of 2014 he completed his dissertation, *Drama Integration: Training Teachers to Use Process Drama in English Language Arts, Social Studies, and World Languages*. He received an additional M.A. in English at National University and his B.A. in Liberal Arts from NYU's Gallatin School of Individualized Study. Jonathan is certified to teach English 6-12 in the state of California, where he taught Theatre and English for five years at North Hollywood High School and was honored with The Inspirational Educator Award by Universal Studios in 2006. Currently, Jonathan is an administrator, faculty member, coordinator of doctoral studies, and student-teaching supervisor at NYU Steinhardt. He serves on the board of the American Alliance for Theatre and Education (AATE).

Jonathan has conducted drama workshops in and around New York City, London, and Los Angeles in schools and prisons. As a performer, he has appeared at Carnegie Hall, the Metropolitan Opera, Town Hall, The Green Space, St. Patrick's Cathedral, The Cathedral of St. John the Divine, The Southbank Centre in London UK, and the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. He co-produced a staged-reading of a new musical, *The Throwbacks*, at the New York Musical Theatre Festival in 2013.

Jonathan's directing credits include *Hamlet, Twelfth Night, Julius Caesar, Elsewhere in Elsinore, Dorothy Rides the Rainbow, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Bye Bye Birdie, The Laramie Project, Grease, Little Shop of Horrors*, and *West Side Story*. Assistant directing includes *Woyzeck* and *The Crucible*. As a performer, he has appeared at Carnegie Hall, the Metropolitan Opera, Town Hall, The Green Space, St. Patrick's Cathedral, The Cathedral of St. John the Divine, The Southbank Centre in London UK, Bord Gáis Energy

Theatre in Dublin, and the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. Production credits include co-producing a staged-reading of a new musical, *The Throwbacks*, at the New York Musical Theatre Festival and serving as assistant production manager and occasionally as stage director for the New York City Gay Men's Chorus since 2014, most recently directing *Quiet No More: A Celebration of Stonewall* at Carnegie Hall for World Pride, 2019.

At NYU, his courses have included Acting: Scene Study, American Musical Theatre: Background and Analysis, Assessment of Student Work in Drama, Development of Theatre and Drama I, Devising Educational Drama Programs and Curricula, Directing Youth Theatre, Drama across the Curriculum and Beyond, Drama in Education I, Drama in Education II, Dramatic Activities in the Secondary Drama Classroom, Methods of Conducting Creative Drama, Theory of Creative Drama, Seminar and Field Experience in Teaching Elementary Drama, Seminar and Field Experience in Teaching Secondary Drama, Shakespeare's Theatre, and World Drama. Early in his placement at NYU, Jonathan served as teaching assistant for American Musical Theatre: Background and Analysis, Seminar in Elementary Student Teaching, Theatre of Brecht and Beckett, and Theatre of Eugene O'Neill and worked as a course tutor and administrator for the study abroad program in London for three summers. He has supervised over 50 students in their student teaching placements in elementary and secondary schools in the New York City Area. Prior to becoming a teacher, Jonathan was an applicant services representative at NYU in the Graduate School of Arts and Science Enrollment Services Office for five years.

Recent publications include *Paradigms and Possibilities: A Festschrift in Honor of Philip Taylor* (2019) and Education at Roundabout: It's about Turning Classrooms into Theatres and the Theatre into a Classroom (with Jennifer DiBella and Mitch Mattson) in *Education and Theatres: Beyond the Four Walls* (edited by Michael Finneran and Michael Anderson; 2019).

Recent speaking engagements include a featured guest spot on Conversations in Social Justice Podcast, York St. John University, speaking about Activism and Race within University Teaching and Research (2021); an invited lecture on Performance as Activism at the Research-Based Theater Seminar, Washington, D.C. Citizen Diplomacy Fund Rapid Response COVID-19 Research-Based Theater

Project, The COVID Monologues, part of the Citizen Diplomacy Action Fund for US Alumni Rapid Response made possible by the US Department of State and Partners of the Americas (2020); a keynote lecture on Drama and Education: Why and How for the Drama and Education Conference, Shanghai, China (2020); and an invited lecture, On Creativity, for the University of Anbar, Iraq (2020).

In addition to his responsibilities at NYU, Jonathan teaches Fundamentals of Public Speaking, History of Theatre, and Introduction to Theatre at CUNY: Borough of Manhattan Community College.

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Divided We Stand

CARMEN MEYERS

BRONX COMMUNITY COLLEGE,

CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

INTRODUCTION

In 2020, the United States experienced an unprecedented election process, followed by its bitter and violent aftermath. After the Capitol riot in January 2021, Ian Bremmer (2021), editor-at-large of *Time Magazine,* stated*, "*there is no advanced industrial democracy in the world more politically divided, or politically dysfunctional, than the United States today" (para. 1). Considering these recent events, I now revisit my work from the past two years, work that generated the play *Divided We Stand* in the spring of 2020*.* This arts-based research project used qualitative interviews from 30 women in Phoenix, Arizona, and New York, New York, to investigate how women negotiated and maintained their identities and relationships in today's climate of political polarization. Utilizing the dramatic form of ethnodrama—specifically, verbatim documentary theatre—*Divided We Stand* served as a theatricalized space for conversations that were not happening, a space that placed women's divergent voices directly in dialogue.

Today, in the opening months of 2021, I question the future of this

project. Do women want to create spaces for this dialogue? Does either side want to understand those with opposing views considering the lies, conspiracy theories, January 6th insurrection, and continued polarized public debate about vaccine freedoms and face mask usage during the COVID-19 pandemic? Personally, how did the past two years working to understand women who voted for Donald Trump prepare me for the news that a close family member, who taught me to be the independent, feminist woman I am today, voted for him in 2020? In light of these questions, I revisit my inspiration and framework for this project to assess its efficacy in our current political and social climate.

This project began with the sincere hope to better understand and navigate my own interpersonal relationships. Like many liberals, I was stunned by the outcome of the 2016 presidential election. What shocked me most was the overwhelming data that 53% of White women voted for Donald J. Trump (CNN, 2016, para. 2). Fifty-three percent of White women voted for him in spite of sexist, discriminatory, and misogynist remarks and acts. Some of these women were my childhood friends from Arizona, and some were my relatives in Michigan. In the days that followed, I had the startling realization that the country, and more importantly for me, its women, were undeniably divided. Speaking to this issue, Jennifer McCoy (2018), Distinguished University Professor of Political Science and founding director of the Global Studies Institute, states that “half of voters of each party say the other party makes them feel afraid, and growing numbers view the policies of the other party as a threat to the nation” (para. 17). This polarizing perception of fear began to influence our behavior and communication with each other.

In the aftermath of the 2016 election, many people gathered like-minded people close to them and began to galvanize; they deleted and blocked their former friends and family members in person and on social media. The Pew Research Center states that “39 percent of social media users have taken steps to block another user or minimize the content they see from them because of something related to politics” (Duggan & Smith, 2016, p. 4). In addition to deleting and blocking, some went as far as to condemn or even attack other points of view. From my own experience, I found that I was able to ignore or downplay some of the content I saw on social media, but heading home for the holidays where I encountered these positions face to face

was a different matter. Hanging out with childhood friends over coffee became unbearable as the discussion inevitably turned to their joy over the outcome of the election. Moreover, comments, discussions, and arguments around the holiday dinner table were exhausting, as I couldn't seem to manage when to speak up or remain silent. Both options left me with feelings of anger and hopelessness. The divide was clear and the gulf that separated us seemed to be widening. I wanted to get a clearer picture of both sides in hope of narrowing the divide. Surely, theatre could offer a path, a practice, and some respite from the storm I felt was coming.

From July 1 to October 15, 2019, I interviewed 15 women in Phoenix, and 15 women in New York City. Phoenix and New York City, with their differing political leanings, offered this project the ideal landscape to investigate the divide. Also, I have strong ties to each city and was able to utilize my local resources to gain access to women in each city. My goal was to gather a broad cross-section of the personal experiences of women in each city with respect to the 2016 presidential election. The interview process followed a script that defined the scope of the project, asked for participant consent, and included 14 questions that addressed the project's main research questions: 1. How have the attitudes and experiences of women been affected by the 2016 election? 2. What issues would women be willing to come together for and what might this look like? 3. How can ethnodrama aid in illustrating empathy between divided women today? Participants self-identified as women, were 18 years or older, and wanted to talk about their experience after the 2016 election. Each interview lasted 45-90 minutes and was video recorded.

The verbatim documentary theatre scripting techniques I used are based on the work of award-winning playwright and actor Anna Deavere Smith, and Professor Joe Salvatore, Clinical Professor of Educational Theatre at NYU Steinhardt and director of the Verbatim Performance Lab. I employed Salvatore's (2018) method of "listening for complete stories, unique explanations, surprising declarations, and struggles for meaning because these ways of sharing information [would] appeal to an audience in performance" (p. 274). If a participant's interview yielded at least three of these sections, these were transcribed in the verbatim transcription technique that captures the participant's vocal cadence. This technique transcribes *word for word*, which means all stops, stutters, and disfluencies are included,

and utilizes a *hard line return* any time the participant pauses in speaking, which creates a new line of text. The script came together around the emerging themes of the 2016 election, the 2017 Women's March, opposing issues, the media, maintaining relationships, and the 2020 election.

The script was workshopped through regional partnerships with the Verbatim Performance Lab (VPL) in New York City and The Bridge Initiative: Women+ in Theatre in Phoenix, Arizona. The results were two staged readings followed by 30-minute post-show discussions in January 2020 in each respective city. The staged readings were well received, and the robust post-show discussions highlighted the challenges of our interpersonal divisions and, in most cases, a desire to begin to mend them. Each woman who bravely shared her story wanted to take part in creating a space to listen and be heard. We are still a deeply divided nation, but *Divided We Stand* reveals on both sides a stubborn hopefulness for better times.

Despite recent events, I stand behind the efficacy of ethnodrama as a catalyst for dialogue between divided groups, and it is my hope that this work and the play you are about to read can serve as a springboard for the healing this country needs. Personally, this experience has taught me valuable lessons. For instance, once you hear someone's story, they become more human. Also, I learned that certain relationships are more important than politics and not to ignore the feelings of betrayal and confusion, but to bravely create the spaces needed to listen and hear each other. This is not an easy practice, but in my humble opinion, a necessary one.

DIVIDED WE STAND

A verbatim docudrama by Carmen Meyers

Characters: (*in order of appearance) Each character name was chosen by each participant and represents how they want to be identified in the script.*

INTERVIEWER
BRUNSWICK TO AZ 68
LYNN 91
MS. T
WHITE FEMALE 53 SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS
MIA MY VOTE DOESN'T COUNT
TRANSGENDER AZ WOMAN
LINDSAY 24
MIMI 48 AMERICAN CITIZEN NIGERIAN DESCENT
HAZEL 72 RETIRED NEWSPAPER REPORTER 1960s RADICAL PROTESTOR
40s NY MOM
AZ NAVY GAL

Six actors are needed. Cast doubling/tripling:
INTERVIEWER
MIA MY VOTE DOESN'T COUNT, MIMI 48 AMERICAN CITIZEN NIGERIAN DESCENT &
AZ NAVY GAL

WHITE FEMALE 53 SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS & TRANSGENDER AZ WOMAN
HAZEL 72 RETIRED NEWSPAPER REPORTER 1960s RADICAL PROTESTOR & LYNN 91
MS. T & LINDSAY 24
40s NY MOM & BRUNSWICK TO AZ 68

The initial development of the play was supported by the Verbatim Performance Lab with a staged reading on January 14, 2020 at New York University. Subsequently, The Bridge Initiative: Women+ in Theatre furthered the play's development with a staged reading at Arizona State University on January 30, 2020. Both were directed by Carmen Meyers and stage managed by Chantel Martinez.

The New York cast was as follows:

Interviewer	Mackie Saylor
Brunswick to AZ 68	Analisa Gutierrez
Lynn 91	Colleen O'Neill
Ms. T	Nicolette Dixon
White Female 53 School of Hard Knocks	Tammie Swopes
Mia My Vote Doesn't Count	Andrea Ambam
Transgender AZ Woman	Mackie Saylor
Libby Writer Mother in Brooklyn	Tammie Swopes
Lindsay 24	Nicolette Dixon
Female Artist 30's	Sherill-Marie Henriquez
Mimi 48 American Citizen Nigerian Descent	Andrea Ambam
Hazel 72 Retired Newspaper Reporter 1960's Radical Protestor	Colleen O'Neill
40's NY Mom	Analisa Gutierrez
AZ Navy Gal	Sherill-Marie Henriquez
Stage Directions	Nicole Fazia

The Phoenix cast was as follows:

Interviewer	Avery Volk
Brunswick to AZ 68	Lindsey Marlin*
Lynn 91	Pamela Sterling

Ms. T	Alyssa Arns
White Female 53 School of Hard Knocks	Laurelann Porter
Mia My Vote Doesn't Count	Shonda Royall
Transgender AZ Woman	Laurelann Porter
Lindsay 24	Alyssa Arns
Mimi 48 American Citizen Nigerian Descent	A.P. Nuri
Hazel 72 Retired Newspaper Reporter 1960's Radical Protestor	Pamela Sterling
40's NY Mom	Lindsey Marlin*
AZ Navy Gal	A.P. Nuri
Stage Directions	Shonda Royall

Note on the verbatim scripting technique:

Each interview was transcribed *word for word*, which means all stops, stutters, and disfluencies are included and a *hard line return* where any time the participant pauses in speaking, a new line of text is created. If the reader follows the hard line of the transcript, pausing at the end of each line, and not the punctuation, they will get a clearer sense of the participants vocal style and context. Also, when a word is in full capitalization, it is read with intensity or emotion. It's important to note that this technique works best when read aloud.

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Carmen Meyers
321 W. 110th St, 17B
New York, New York 10026
(917) 774-1167

Pre-show- Clock of the World by Krista Detor is playing and rolling images of the 2016 election are on a screen above the stage. There are four chairs stage left, five chairs stage right, all facing out, and two chairs center stage interview style. Each chair has a character signifier, a costume piece or prop that is meaningful to each character. For example, it could be a hat, visor, scarf, necklace, sweater, glasses, button, jacket, or hair tie. As each actor enters a scene, they put on their character signifier in full view of the audience.

Slide projection*:* From July to October 2019, I sat down face to face with 30 women in Phoenix, AZ and New York, NY and asked them about their experiences surrounding the 2016 presidential election and beyond to explore how women are negotiating and maintaining their identities and relationships in today's climate of political polarization. These are twelve of their stories, verbatim.

As lights go down, the actors enter during the audio of CNN's Wolf Blitzer's announcement of Donald Trump's 2016 election win and sit in the chair of their first character.

SCENE ONE: THE INTERVIEW

Lights up on the Interviewer and Brunswick to Arizona 68.

INTERVIEWER
So, we're ready to begin.
I'm just going to ask you a series of open-ended questions and just respond
however you feel most comfortable.

BRUNSWICK TO AZ 68
Okay.

INTERVIEWER
(*overlap the next three lines)*
So, uhm-
yeah

BRUNSWICK TO AZ 68
Can- can- can I ask you a question?

INTERVIEWER
Of course you can.

BRUNSWICK TO AZ 68
Uhm,
and I guess
I just
are- are you a
person for Trump?
[pause]
Is- is that what this
is- is- is this a women for Trump
thing?

INTERVIEWER
No

BRUNSWICK TO AZ 68
Well no okay.
I guess I-

INTERVIEWER
To give you a little backstory.

BRUNSWICK TO AZ 68
Okay.

INTERVIEWER
After the 2016 election,
I was not
thrilled with the outcome,
but I was more upset about
how
friends were treating each other
on social media and in person
going home for the holidays.
It was dividing families. It was breaking up friendships of 30 years,
and I thought
we're all women,
women I love and respected the day before,
and all of a sudden things just seemed to be
[pause]
I was really disturbed by that.
So, I thought I wanted to do a piece about where women stand today.
How are they managing all of this?

BRUNSWICK TO AZ 68
Okay.

INTERVIEWER
And how can we do it better is really what I wanted to get to the heart of.

BRUNSWICK TO AZ 68
Okay.

INTERVIEWER
Even if we disagree completely
so
yeah

that's what it's for,
and I've talked to women from Arizona and New York
all up and down the spectrum,
all different age groups different races different occupations,
just to try to get a sense of where we are today as women and how we want to move
forward.

BRUNSWICK TO AZ 68
Okay.

INTERVIEWER
That's what it's about.

BRUNSWICK TO AZ 68
Okay
I- I'm-
I'm good with that.
I- I appreciate-
I appreciate
no
because I-
I am very much for
our president.
I was thrilled with the election
uhm
results
uhm
so and- and I found those same things, and
I was
disturbed.

INTERVIEWER
Yeah.

BRUNSWICK TO AZ 68
In- in a different way maybe then- then you.
You know?
Since you weren't thrilled with the election

[both overlap with laughter]
results.

INTERVIEWER
[both overlap with laughter] I was really- really unhappy.

BRUNSWICK TO AZ 68
So yeah-
so
and- and I tried to-
I tried to talk with some people because well-
we'll-
I'll get into that, yeah.

INTERVIEWER
Yeah
but yes that's where the heart of the piece comes from.

BRUNSWICK TO AZ 68
That's- that's good.
That's good I like that.

INTERVIEWER
I hope so

BRUNSWICK TO AZ 68
Yes- yes.

INTERVIEWER
So, how did you hear about the project and more importantly
why did you decide to do it?

BRUNSWICK TO AZ 68
Uhm Tammy,
uh
sent, I guess through that messenger thing-

INTERVIEWER
Yeah

BRUNSWICK TO AZ 68
on Facebook-
and said that she had just, I guess she had just interviewed with you
and
we have the
same
uhhhh feelings
about the election and she said
she said, “Would you like to do somethin like that” and I said,
“Well sure.”
you know
uh it’s-
I'll do that
and- and she said, “Well
just be honest,”
and I said, “Oh I will be.” *[both laugh]* (*Brunswick-take chair UL, sit)*

SCENE TWO: FEELING UNSAFE

INTERVIEWER (*stay seated in chair*)
I never remember thinking about politics growing up
talking about politics.
I remember very little about my schooling about politics.
So, I didn’t learn anything-
but I do remember
when I was older
one of the first things I remember about politics
is when Evan Mecham was elected-
I think-
[pause]
governor of Arizona,
and the first thing he did on day one
was he got rid of
Martin Luther King Jr. Day
and
we made national news.

LYNN 91 *(X- DL)*
I- I- I pray
that he

is re-elected.

INTERVIEWER *(stand)*
Lynn 91. (*take chair UC, sit)*

LYNN 91
Because
if the Democrats get control of Congress
and our Senate
and the White House, the oval office
uhm that they will undo
almost everything.
They've already talked about our taxes will go up
is ANYBODY LISTENING
out there
you know?

MS. T *(X- DR)*
So, I look at you know young women today and it's like
what if Planned Parenthood goes away?
Like
I know so many women who would be
up shit crick
excuse my language.

LYNN 91
Ms. T.

MS. T
But they would be r—you know hard-pressed to find
affordable health care.
When I first moved to New York- I didn't have any healthcare and y—
you know using
-nd it was pre-Obamacare.
Umm-
[*lip smack*] you know and I- I just- having to use like health clinics and stuff and
which were awful and waiting for hours and hours for a
you know

a pap smear or whatever and I mean it just was-
it was awful so
but it existed
thankfully uhm.
In some cities- I think you have better access to healthcare than other cities.
Seattle was pretty good
and I had a harder time with health care in New York uhm than I did in Seattle.
Uhm
I'm a cancer survivor so
you know I- thankfully I had insurance when I ha- had cancer uhm
but I definitely worry about
that- and what young women are encountering and- and- and especially women in the arts.

WHITE FEMALE 53 SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS *(X- DC)*
God, I hate to say this to you.
I
[*pause]*
think
[*pause]*
Obama ruined our country.
[*pause]*

MS. T
White Female 53 School of Hard Knocks.

WHITE FEMALE 53 SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS
And I think he wanted
our country to fail.
Uhm
and
the health insurance
almost buried
my family personally where I had to go back to work.
Uhm
which is very hard when you have a disabled husband,
and two little children and you have to leave them in a disabled

husband's
hands and I'm not asking for pity.
I don't uhm-
everybody should have to do what you have to for your family period
but
when I am told
I have to have health insurance
and it is controlled
and it costs me 26 thousand dollars a year with a 16 thousand dollar deductible
yet
they want to give people
who aren't even coming into-who don't even contribute to this country
free health insurance.
I- I started-
that's when I really started gett'in it.

LYNN 91
So uhm
the open borders this is-
WHAAAAT-
what are we gonna do with these people?
I love them.
I think they are
searching for a better life for themselves. America offers that
but
our welfare programs, you know- we're BROKE.
We have a 22 trillion dollar national debt
and in 1993 when the national debt was in the billions and we were paying 9 billion a year in interest
that was 1993!

MS. T
I worry about student loans.
Not only my own but-
for-
for everybody.
Cause
you're going to NYU.

I mean- [*laughs*]
yeah-
you know!
You're getting an incredible education
and
I know I got an incredible education- you know
fourteen years later I'm still thankful
but
I'm going to be paying for it forever-
forever.
Cause- you know-
it's like- think about the money that I spend each month paying my student loans
and
I mean
I'm—I'm paying
as much in student loan payments as I pay in rent each month.

LYNN 91
I was so depressed because I have
children
grandchildren
now I have
great grandchildren and great great
I have two great great.
Uhm
I was so depressed and a man I didn't even like put it into perspective for me,
"Lynn
your descendants
will have to deal
with the world
they are living in".
As we did with Kennedy's assassination
and Bobby's
as well and Martin Luther King
and uh we dealt with it
we had to
what else can you do?

WHITE FEMALE 53 SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS
I'm not the only person it affected.
It was burying people when the economy hit recession.
People put- were losing houses- why do you think they couldn't afford health insurance?
People-
you know were so sick couldn't take their medicine.
SHAME on you!
People who have
paid their taxes
pay YOUR salary
pay for the- this wonderful country-
you're taking from us to give to people
who
they deserve it, if they'd come over
and they wanna work- like my grandfather had to become an American.
He had to learn it.
He had to work it.
He had the first masonry company in Connecticut
and you're just going to give it and you're going to take it away from us?
No. It affected me
and that's when I
started to dig in my heels
and I was a Democrat!

MS. T
[*Dental click*]
I don't have children
cause that's equal-
in cost and that's kind of how I've justified
uhm,
not.
I never wanted to have kids
but
that's my kind of- part of my rationalizing of it.
It's like
well

kids are equal to my master's degree.
You're saddled with the debt and it's like
I can't afford to have kids.

LYNN 91
I put America-
in my God box
and I also have people who are sick friends who are
sick and dying in my God box.
And turn- I've turned them over
uh to- to God
and- and the country- I've put America
wrote it out.
I have all these little slips of paper and if someone dies
ah they stay
in my God box.
And one day
I got mad at God for some reason
and I took my God box and I dumped it.
And my husband said
I told him and he said uhm, "Oh
that's great!
You've now takin' back
all of the people
and the country that were in there"- and man I couldn't sit down fast enough and write down America and all of my friends and put them back in.
Because only God can carry
that and be responsible for that
the weight of the world.

(all start X to chairs, Mia's words stop you, you listen)

MIA MY VOTE DOESN'T COUNT
hold two beats
I think it's a joke nowadays.
Cause a lot of women don't stick together.
We don't.
Everybody teaches us that divide and conquer is better.

Divide and conquer.

LYNN 91
Mia My Vote Doesn’t Count.

(*all finish X to chairs and sit)*

MIA MY VOTE DOESN’T COUNT *(* X-DC)
An you see what happens when you divide an conquer.
They make you think you have control.
Then what happens-
what happened to Hillary-
they take it back from you.
You’re a puppet.
You don't have control if you don't have control of- of autonomy
of your voice
of your- of your
how much money you make-
of when you can get married and have kids-
of how uhm-
what kind of house you want-
of your rights.
It's like common-
we can't even decide this-
what makes you think we can
be together as one
if you can't even see what they're doing?
Because the best way to keep control is to keep us separated
and they start racially first-
then you go by class
and then the final strike is-
let me poison her thoughts
and then you're done.
They have everything when you do that
and a person’s like,
“it's not that easy.”
It is that easy.
And
that's what we're going through right now

because everybody's like let's just vote for a woman.
I'm not voting for Kamala Harris.
I'll put that on record.
I'm not- I don't care if she's woman or not.
I don't care if she's black.
None of their plans make sense.
I'm flipping a coin just to vote for the 2020 election
and somebody said why
because their plans I-
make no absolute sense.
How can you have ah- free- uhm-
free schooling
when we have one of worst schoolings in this country.
New York is horrible!
They don't even and-
when you hear some stories from the kids about the discrimination and bullying they go through
and the superintendent's response is,
"we talked to the child."
You did?
Okay.
So, why does a little boy end up dead the next day.
You did nothing but stay in your office and get your paycheck.
Just say that they-
made you say that and shut up
because you don't want to lose your job.
So, that's the biggest thing.
A lot of people are afraid to speak up and that's why a lot of women don't speak
or try to work together because they're tired.
Some peoples been doing this since
even before the suffrage movement
and you know that was a joke too
because most people don't talk about that.
Susan B Anthony didn't do everything.
Nobody talks about that.
It's a joke.
Women's history month-
there's- there's billions of women whose stories haven't been heard.

They're like, "how you know this?"
I know my history.
I had to learn my history.
When you start seeing stuff like that-
you're like-
how do I have a voice in a society where I feel like
my vote and my voice doesn't matter? *(X back to chair)*

SCENE THREE: MEDIA MACHINE

Slide projection:
The fairness doctrine of the United States Federal Communications Commission (FCC), introduced in 1949, was a policy that required the holders of broadcast licenses to both present controversial issues of public importance and to do so in a manner that was, in the FCC's view, honest, equitable, and balanced. The FCC eliminated the policy in 1987 and removed the rule that implemented the policy from the Federal Register in August 2011 (Boliek, Politico, 2011).

This will be a movement piece where the cast creates the media machine of sound and movement in rehearsal.

INTERVIEWER *(X DR)*
From the beginning
I was fascinated by,
"How do we know what we know?"
"Where do we get our information?"
"How do we know
what we believe to be true?"
And
I began asking women,
"how do you know what you know-
where do you get
your information?"
And I was struck by, that-
that many women expressed that
what they believe is
based on fact
and they believe the EXACT opposite

of each other.
So,
is someone wrong?

Machine starts slowly and builds actor by actor. Once machine is established, INTERVIEWER begins to read quotes on note cards and tosses them away when finished. The reading and the machine pick up speed till the last line.

INTERVIEWER
Sexual predator
Just locker room talk
Free healthcare for all
Obamacare is a disaster
Destruction of our planet
Manufactured crisis
Russian Interference
Fake news
Trump ties to Putin
No crime/No collusion
Trump rallies=more hate crimes
We're respected again
Narcissist personality disorder
Common sense
Crooked Hillary
Deplorables
Gang of thugs
Stronger economy
Country run as a business
Republican extremist
Liberal elites
Path to citizenship
Build a wall
Not fit for office
Over 2 million jobs
Children in cages
Who pays?- we're broke

(Machine pieces/actors peel off back to their chairs one by one, until

we are left with only the first actor's sound and movement for 3-4 beats, X back to chair.)

SCENE FOUR: TRANSGENDER: REAL OR NOT

INTERVIEWER
One of the most difficult
and
joyous aspects of
interview work is
[exhale] the practice of holding space
for someone to speak their truth.
In that moment
it's UNSCRIPTED
it's
visceral and real and
so in the moment.
You can't GET any more in the moment.
Uhm-
the weight of that
is immense. *(sit)*

LINDSAY 24
I feel like we've worked so hard to acknowledge that we're different
and I mean
I am equal to my brother but I'm not the same
and I don't want to be the same.

INTERVIEWER
Lindsay 24.

LINDSAY 24
And when it comes to female sports and
uhm I don't know a wide variety of things
you know now it's
a- a man
wants to identify as a woman
so he gets to run on the female track team
and therefore wins

and
it's like WHAT ARE WE DOING!
How uh-
how are we even- I mean- how is that even
because some person- one adult
feels
a certain way we're going to put
women and children really
at risk for a- a- a wide variety of things-
a lot of public accommodations
uhm bathroom shower locker rooms.
We just have some open-door policy all the sudden for somebody who says, “oh I feel like I'm a female today.
So, I'm gonna to go into the women's locker room
where”…
I mean if I was a mom and I took my girl to the gym or something-
I mean I change in the locker room
coming from work or whatever
I mean sure- I'm not maybe like the most modest but some of my sisters ARE-
and- and nobody deserves to feel violated that way.
I think that there's reasonable accommodations that can be made for individuals that are struggling with gender identity uhm
and their sexuality.
I think that there's a lot of options
uhm
but putting
children and women at risk and
taking ten steps backward in
women's equality is not the way to do it.

TRANSGENDER AZ WOMAN
Many
women
I believe
have no problem understanding
me.

LINDSAY 24
Transgender Arizona Woman.

TRANSGENDER AZ WOMAN
Some of them
probably appreciate the fact that
someone who was born into
white patriarchy and privilege
gave it up
to advocate not only for women
but also for
the women who are the most
vilified and disrespected in American society right now
the transgender women.
Unfortunately
the people on the other side
are receiving these false messages about
what a woman like me
really is
and what our motives are.
And
these peop- these women on the other side
who aren't accepting
and don't understand
largely don't want to ask me
what is it like
to feel the way you do and to be a transgender woman.
Meanwhile they're being told by a lot of
white men who run churches that suppress
any kind of woman what to think
about women in general and specifically about transgender women
but these women aren't willing to stop and say
is there another side to this story?
[They may say], “I'm not willing to talk to that person that transgender woman
they might hurt me somehow”
or
if I talk to them my church
parishioners may

ostracize me
and assume I am part of
the problem because
I condone the existence of a transgender woman
by simply talking to that person
and asking them
about their feelings and their opinions.
We've got a real breakdown
and
it's
probably not going to be overcome
until something happens
that is
very dramatic
and forces these
women on the other side of the aisle so to speak
to
think differently and start asking questions.
I hope that whatever it is does not involve
any tragedy
but I'm
not very optimistic
that
it won't
involve
anything less than
these women having a child or a grandchild
who is transgender and ends up attempting to take their own life.
I really think that's
probably where it's going
to happen and I hope that
the children
who are subjected to that and are suffering
don't succeed in their effort to
commit suicide
and that there's something left of their lives
to
build upon
along with

their mothers'
or grandmothers'
willingness to rethink their position on whether being transgender
is real or not.

SCENE FIVE: TEARS

As each character speaks, they begin to create a group image of their tribe: liberals: Mimi, Ms. T, Hazel-stage right, conservatives: Brunswick, Hard Knocks-stage left. They can react with celebration or support to each other within their tribe.

INTERVIEWER *(stand in front of chair)*
The 2016 election felt so
[*pause]*
personal.
It felt like
the country voted against
me
against what I stand for, what I believe in.
It was then
that I
REALLY started to see
that half this country believed
and felt very different from me.
I remember that first day
on the train
the subway
and it was like
like
it was like the city was in mourning, it was in silence.
[*pause]*
You got on the train and there was no sound.
No one was listening to music.
No one was talking-
there was just
nothing
and
there were people crying on the subway train

just crying
uhm
and this feeling of
a death.

BRUNSWICK TO AZ 68 *(X DL-leave space for White Female to your left)*
The night the night of the election
the 2016
uh
election
they
uhm it
it was 99%
99%
Hillary was going to win
the polls.
You know,
“Hillary’s gunna win Hillary’s gunna win”
and then
you know as we watched-
in fact I didn't watch for awhile
cuz I said uhhhhhhh
I don't know if I can see this
you know
and I, and I said, “If she wins let's just go away for a few days”. Cuz I- I need to
you know just
grapple with that.

WHITE FEMALE 53 SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS (X left of Brunswick)
We were living in Florida
Hellsville.
Sorry
uhm
and
it was Clinton
who I think is-

deserves to be in jail
she should be in prison straight down that line.
I just- she is a HORRIBLE person.
I went to bed- she was winning
and I had to go to work the next morning
and I was like alright
here we go
more bullshit down the line.

BRUNSWICK TO AZ 68
Our- our neighbors came over
and they said,
*[whispers] "*Have you, have you seen, do you have the T.V. on?"
And I said, "No I turned it off for awhile."
"Turn it on turn it on!"
And then
I forget what the states were but
MSNBC
CNN all these people-
you could tell
if you turned on one of those channels
they were like
ughhhhh
this can't be happening you know.
The-
just- I mean
they looked like they were just-
just about in tears.
You know and we're sittin' there goin' "yeah
YEAH!"
Laughter

WHITE FEMALE 53 SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS
I got up at like 11:30
and I said okay I'll go turn the TV on
let me see
and yay
I was very happy.
Actually danced around the house and woke the kids up and my

husband. [*laughs]*
And I know many women that didn't get out of bed for days.
And I asked one
I said
okay
we're on opposite ends but why?
“Well because I wanted a woman in.”
Okay
but
why?
What- why did you want Hillary Clinton in so bad?
What about all of this…
“Just didn't matter to me. I just wanted a woman in.”
Ok. So-
you- you haven’t researched. You haven't looked. You haven't-
“Nope. I just wanted a woman in.”
Ok.

(Brunswick and White Female X back to chairs)

[Pause]

MIMI 48 AMERICAN CITIZEN NIGERIAN DESCENT
[in chair] I could cry right now.
[pause holding back tears]
It's like *(*X DR, leave space for Hazel to your right)
what happened?
[pause]

WHITE FEMALE 53 SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS
Mimi 48 American Citizen Nigerian Descent.

MIMI 48 AMERICAN CITIZEN NIGERIAN DESCENT
Like you know, you think about the people who just sat back and didn't vote.
You know, you just completely discounted yourself and look where we are today.
[*takes a breath, pause]*

MS. T *(X L of Mimi)*
I was walking from
my house to my coffee shop that morning-
which is just around the corner- before I went to get on the train.
And
um-
I—I decided I couldn't go in to get coffee cause I knew if I went in for coffee I would cry
and my girlfriend who works at the coffee shop saw me and she came and ran out and she threw her arms around me and we sobbed on the street.

HAZEL 72 RETIRED NEWSPAPER REPORTER 1960s RADICAL PROTESTOR
(X stand R of Mimi)
I'm not a crier.
I simply don't cry. It just doesn't happen to be my emotional response to anything okay.
So, when I tell you
that the day after and by the way I didn't stay up
on the night of the election.

MS. T
Hazel 72 Retired Newspaper Reporter 1960s Radical Protestor.

HAZEL 72 RETIRED NEWSPAPER REPORTER 1960s RADICAL PROTESTOR
Who had to stay up? You know what the result was going to be, right? Hillary was getting elected. I didn’t discuss it. I didn't pay attention. I didn't. I didn't have the T.V. on nothing.
So, the next day
when I found out
uhm I was alone in the house. I certainly wasn't doing this for effect or anything like that.
I sobbed. And the reason I sobbed- I didn't think Trump was going to be as bad as he is.
I really didn't.
It was the first time in
my

life and this includes the Vietnam War and
the first time in my life that I was deeply ashamed to be American.
That we had voted this man
into office and I lived in a country that voted this man into office.

MS. T
Part of it was this you know moment of, “get it all out” because you're gonna have to go and face a room of students.
Um and we've been talking about this for weeks.
And
I had one student who was very much a Trump supporter
and the rest of them were not
and it was a very difficult Fall, kind of finding the teacher balance of
um
empowering kids to have a voice and to speak up and speak out and I'm very much a speak truth to power person.
Um
and so how do I give the you know
seat at the table to everybody?

MIMI 48 AMERICAN CITIZEN NIGERIAN DESCENT
Uhm [*laughs]*
I had a party
thinking that
Hillary was going to win.
And uhm-
my brother describes it as the Saturday- Saturday Night Live skit.
[*laughs]*
Yeah. He said that my neighbor and him were sitting there
and us girls we're talking and all the guys we're talking and slowly but surely it's like
we're like
all excited and they're like, “Oh, this is not good. This is not good.”
And
it just became-
all of a sudden realization and
one by one
and everybody was just like
[pause]

Wow.
This is really not happening-
complete- it was like a nightmare
and everybody leaving- people in tears and it was just
horrible.

HAZEL 72 RETIRED NEWSPAPER REPORTER 1960s RADICAL PROTESTOR
And I don't want to hear about how he didn't win the popular election.
Yeah.
Granted he didn't.
Take a look at how many millions of votes he got.
Yeah I'm not -
for the purposes of why I was crying-
it didn't matter.

MIMI 48 AMERICAN CITIZEN NIGERIAN DESCENT
I think because we're New Yorkers too.
We actually knew
who this guy
is
and was about to be the President of the United States! [*laughs]*
[*laughing through words]* It's like-
it's like
what?
This is a joke
but it was a nightmare.
Yeah-
yeah
I'm still crying.

MS. T
So
I got myself to school
and
I decided I would do a- a restorative circle like a content circle.
And um
I had everybody- I gave everybody an index card and they all sat you know- there were thirty-two of them- it was my AP English

class.
They all sat in a circle- this group of eleventh graders
and you could see it on their faces
and then the young man who of course was thrilled with the outcome of the election comes in with his red hat on
and is like, “Make America great again!”
And-
and-
I'm like,
“Okay- I'm gonna give you the platform and you get to go first and talk about how
thrilled you are
but then
everybody else gets a seat at the table and they get to talk about how they're feeling.
It's really important for everybody to be able to voice how they're feeling in this moment because
um
I know how I'm feeling and- and if it was me, I would want somebody to ask me how I was feeling.”
So-
so that's what we did
and I proceeded to listen to thirty-two-
you know seventeen-year-olds talk about
how
heartbroken they were
and how disappointed and shocked and surprised and
hurt
and
um confused and
unsafe.
‘Specially my students of color
suddenly feeling unsafe
um and
being worried about riding the subway.
And it was like-
I—I wasn't prepared for what- what came.
Um there's nothing that could have prepared me for that conversation that day.

um
[pause]
But it was probably the best thing I could have done
um because their catharsis was my catharsis.

(All but Brunswick X back to chairs, sit)

SCENE SIX: WOMEN'S MARCH

40s NY MOM *(X DC-w/chair)*
I went to the Women's March in DC- the first one
and I was-
it was so wonderful- it was wonderful right?

INTERVIEWER: 40s New York Mom.

40s NY MOM
And it was peaceful and it was loving and it was warm and it was like exciting and I like ran into friends there and it was like
everybody felt so good and so powerful even though it's such a negative thing
for such a negative reason.
And so we had actually-
we
a friend and I had actually bought plane tickets the day we heard about it- we bought plane tickets
and I'm so glad we did.
Because you couldn't get there right?
So we flew from the LaGuardia first thing in the morning-
at the crack.
Got there.
Had this wonderful experience- we had- we had gotten a hotel- we spent the night- we got up
the next day- first thing in the morning.
So we were in
the airport
on the way
back
and there was this

family- these women- it was
so
two women.
It was a woman and her son and then this other woman- had been to the inauguration
like and they were chatting with each other
and they were from
Texas or like very- they were- and they
had
drawls
and they were just like, “Oh my gosh it was so wonderful, didn’t we have a great time.”
And to the son
she says to her son, “Oh my gosh wasn't that the most wonderful- don’t you feel so lucky that you were there at the inauguration. Oh my gosh what
a magic moment” and whatever da da da.
And then the other one said
uhm, “and did you see this dis- this mess yesterday- that march- what a disaster- what a
bunch of fools” and like
just completely going on and like and saying- the way she said it- she made it sound like it was- it was just like chaos and what a nightmare and chaos.
And I was and I turned to her and I said,
“it was wonderful
you should have joined it.”
And they just looked at me
like I was crazy.
And my friend
she was like,
“let's go.”
you know.
And she was like, “don't get started with these people.”
You know, I said it was wonderful and you should of joined in
and that was, you know like it, but they're- they had this impression that it was
chaos
and horrible

and violent and you could tell the way that they were speaking about it.
It was like- it was a fantastic day!
The only people there who were chaotic or violent were the protesters.
Yeah. You know.
The people who were there
with their burning baby signs whatever.
Uhm so yeah- it was- it was really lovely and that gave me so much hope.

(Wh. Female, Lindsay, Navy Gal X in when they speak and form semi-circle standing behind 40s Mom)

WHITE FEMALE 53 SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS *(X UL 40s Mom)*
I don't- I don't believe in the Women's March.
Because I-
Nobody- everybody I ask,
“Why is there a women's march?”
Not one person can give me
an exact why there is.
Why is there a Martin Luther march?
Okay, it's to honor
the blacks. What he believed in-
that eh and he just didn't believe in blacks he believed in-
he tried to make it
united.
Why is there a women’s march?

LINDSAY 24 *(X UR of 40s Mom)*
I remember feeling like-
I was so
disturbed
by
the signs that women held
and
the rhetoric that was used and it was so
discouraging
and uhm
depressing that woman feel like we have to
shout from the rooftops and

be so overly
not just dramatic but
uhm
I mean perverse isn't the right word but
I don’t know what I’m searching for I guess like the uhm-
bluntness.
I don’t know.

WHITE FEMALE 53 SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS
Why is it okay that you're having a five-year old wear a vagina on their head.
You know what?
You lose the respect at that point.
That woman
lost the respect
not just from men
but from other women.
I-
I-
I totally lost respect for that.
I don’t understand that.
Wouldn't- what-
what did you gain by having your five-year-old somewhere wear a vagina on their head?
He doesn't know what it is.
He will [*laughs]*
but he doesn’t.
One way or another he will.

AZ NAVY GAL *(X Up of 40s Mom)*
I think about that
because you know I- I have friends that will go down to the women's rallies -
put on the pink
you know
pussy hat.

LINDSAY 24
Arizona Navy Gal.

AZ NAVY GAL
And I- I just that- that
I look at that and I go
eh
why? You know?
We're trying to like differentiate ourselves as wo- women. So, why do you need to wear your genitalia on your head?
You know that's-
that's always what I think when I see it.
And it- and again I'm not going to NOT be friends with these women because
I think they're great people.
We just disagree about
that
and I know not to talk about it
not to bring it up.

LINDSAY 24
I don't think Donald Trump's a good person. I don't.
Uhm. I think that his administration is doing a lot of wonderful things and I think that him being in office has
provided a lot of really great benefits for our economy and country but as a person the guy sucks. [*laughs]*
And uhm
I heard before- all he needs to do to win 2020 is just
close his mouth and point at the Democrats because it's just been ridiculous.
But-
yeah. I just remember seeing that women's march and people were just so angry
and so consumed by their hatred for uhm
you know our then now President.
And
it just blew me away that
women were willing to throw away
I guess
just any sor- any sort of dignity
to- to scream their own message.
And to me that's just not an effective way of communicating what you

want
and I think that
uhm it looks childish
and it looks immature
and it made me
sad that- that something that's supposed to be celebrating womanhood was just
hating somebody else so much.
I mean
I actually attended the pro-life march that same week
and so
it was really surreal.
I mean it was really-
it's just sad and it really does- it just makes me sad to
have gotten so far that
not only are we not invited but just completely not welcome and shut out.
And uhm-
there's no
opportunity even for a dialogue.
It's like ye- once somebody's made up their mind
it just feels like
there's no chance for a conversation anymore.

ALL reset and change character as needed singing Family Feud song.

SCENE SEVEN: FAMILY FEUD

The cast: Interviewer, Mimi 48 American Citizen Nigerian Descent, Brunswick to AZ 68, Ms. T, White Female 53 School of Hard Knocks, and Hazel Retired Newspaper Reporter 1960s Radical Protestor will make all Family Feud sounds, including singing the opening/closing music, the music as contestants cross to the buzzer, the buzzer sound, and the screen tile flips. Mimi 48 American Citizen Nigerian Descent and Brunswick to AZ 68 cross center and stand in front of the Interviewer with one arm behind their back and one hand ready to hit the invisible buzzer.

INTERVIEWER: (*reads from an index card, with one hand held out palm up as buzzer)*

We interviewed 30 women in Phoenix, AZ and New York, NY on what issues they thought women on both sides of the aisle could come together on. The top three answers are on the board. Name an issue women can come together on.

BRUNSWICK TO AZ 68
(slaps buzzer) Abortion.

ALL
[*make buzzer sound]* Naaaah!

INTERVIEWER
(*to Mimi 48 American Citizen Nigerian Descent)* You have an opportunity to steal. What's an issue women can come together on?

MIMI 48 AMERICAN CITIZEN NIGERIAN DESCENT
Healthcare.

Liberals cheer.

INTERVIEWER
The survey says…

ALL
[*make buzzer sound]* Naaaah!

INTERVIEWER
Answer number three.

ALL
[*make tile flip sound]* DING! Patriarchy.

INTERVIEWER
Number two.

ALL
[*make tile flip sound]* DING! Domestic Violence.
INTERVIEWER
The number one answer to what issue can women come together on

is?

ALL
[*make tile flip sound]* DING! Equal Pay!

All sing the Family Feud song till next scene is set up-change characters as needed.

SCENE EIGHT: COMING TOGETHER—WHAT COULD THAT LOOK LIKE?

Each actor will stand directly in front of the person speaking before them creating a single line.

INTERVIEWER *(stand in front of your chair)*
In Arizona
I found this
wonderful mix of women that were willing to share
their stories
shout from the mountain tops you know.
In New York
[pause]
I struggled.
I- I didn't want the New York story to be just liberal
but in the three months that I-
I emailed
infiltrated Facebook pages and was not so politely told to remove myself
badgered
contacted every conservative organization in the city
multiple times
not one conservative woman agreed to speak with me.
[pause]
Everyone I talked to said,
"Oh
I think I know one person who's a Republican."
Sometimes they would contact them and I would email and share that I had strict guidelines and they
they could remain anonymous
and then there'd be

radio silence.
[pause]
I did hear from one woman who said,
“I just can’t.
I’m looking for a job.”

WHITE FEMALE 53 SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS
After my client’s husband died she had a luncheon
for everybody at
the-
the- the-
the Farm.
And so she text me and said or emailed me whatever and said you know I wanna get all these strong women who helped me blah blah blah
you know through this
and I was like
okay. And
so
I
didn't have an opinion one way or another- didn't really know why I was goin’- I didn't know anybody I mean
I didn’t- I knew her very little.
And that’s it-
I went there and I was sittin’ around the table and I was like well this is pretty cool. I mean everybody's talking and everybody has stories and it wasn't just about John or Connie it was
about life stories, kids, how’s your kids.
You know-
who's getting a divorce- who's this- who’s that.
I was like, this is really cool.
Like
you know just
a bunch of women
being respectful
having fun.
I don’t even know if we were drinking wine, water couldn’t even tell ya cause
I just don't remember but

do I think it could happen now?

40s NY MOM
I think it's just a lack of empathy maybe.
Like an- not an understanding of
how other people live
and a refusal to
kind of
peek into other people's worlds somehow.
Like I was saying my- my bubble.
My very like- I've been here forever- I've not- I have an idea how other people and I certainly judge how they live
you know but I've never lived in their shoes.
And- and I- I think-
I'd like to think I'm empathetic but I-
then the reality is like-
I don't know how these people live- like and I don't necessarily want to know.
I'm just like nope.
You're wrong and I'm right.

LINDSAY 24
To be fair
they're emotional issues. I mean a lot of political issues are highly emotional for people and it's because their story
and it's because you know
they had their own personal experiences and
I- I don't think those should ever be discounted.
Uhm but I do think that-
that has to step aside when it comes to
creating policy and creating things that are effective for society and culture.
Uhm
and that's what's tough
is
we're human.

MIMI 48 AMERICAN CITIZEN NIGERIAN DESCENT
I guess you just have to listen.
You know-
and listen
and say your side and
they always say put yourself in the conversation.

HAZEL 72 RETIRED NEWSPAPER REPORTER 1960s RADICAL PROTESTOR
You're going to think I'm trying to be snot nose clever. I'm not. I'm dead serious
about what I'm gonna say.
I think women have to get together on-
believe it or not the easiest quickest way for me to say this is to give an analogy.
Alright-
I remember-
decades and decades and decades ago watching television and seeing something on television
that
changed my attitude towards racism and sexism and antisemitism and EVERYTHING.
It was a panel discussion. I don't remember who the moderator was- but
it was three black people
being interviewed.
And they were the equivalent- I can't tell you who they were. I don't remember but it would have been the equivalent of Anita Hill you know-
black lawyers.
We're talking about
in the sixties. I mean we're talking about-
and Ralph Bunch.
I don't know if you know that name but he was our ambassador- United States Ambassador to the UN
was black.
And
the moderator of this panel
who's white

said, “I don't see how you can say”
being deliberately provocative you know.
“I don't see how you can say
that we're still racist in this country, I mean look at Ralph Bunch we have a black man
who was representing us in the UN.”
And the answer was-
I’ve never forgotten this,
“You really don't understand.
You have always given us the right to have Ralph Bunch.
You've always given us the right to have Jackie Robinson
or jazz musicians.
We want the right to have muggers.
When you get mugged by a white white person
you don't automatically say white people are muggers.
We want the right to have a black person
be a mugger and not have all the rest of us targeted, tarred with his crime.”
And I remember it completely opened
my eyes
and just changed the way I feel about everything.
When you say, what can women do?
What is the one issue that we have to do?
There are women out there who sleep their way to the top.
There are women out there who when they become bosses are mean to other women.
There are women out there who are cunts.
We need the right to have bad acting women.
And that's the only way I know how to describe that is by describing seeing that on TV.
I don't…you know something if you go out and you do something really cunty
I don't want to get blamed for it.
I didn't do it-
right to have muggers.
So, I think that's one of the main issues we have to fight for-
don't lump us all together.

SCENE NINE: RESTORATIVE CIRCLE

MIMI 48 AMERICAN CITIZEN NIGERIAN DESCENT

Steps out of line, speaks to the cast and directly to audience.

Look where we are today.
You know, why can't we just like have
like
get everybody in like a High School
you know Auditorium
who could- different backgrounds and all that and let's just sit and talk and see what we come up with right?
Put women together and let's listen to each other-
[laughing] lock those doors!
Just know that we're not going to agree with each other on everything that's just not human nature
but if you can have some kind of common understanding of where somebody else comes from
then maybe we can move forward together.

The women on stage respond differently to MIMI depending on their character with "Ok", "Maybe", "I don't know", "Lord." Some choose to go back to their seat's others choose to rally the women together. The INTERVIEWER sets her chair and sits up center encouraging others to do the same. The actors set five chairs in a closer semi-circle on either side of the interviewer and place the character signifier on the chair.

(Each actor puts on the signifier and sits in the chair of the character that speaks first in this scene, and switches chairs and signifiers to their other character as the scene progresses in full view of the audience)

Once everyone is seated, there is a palpable silence as they are all sizing each other up and wondering what this face to face encounter will bring.

INTERVIEWER
O.K. The doors are hypothetically locked. Who would like to begin?

[pause]

BRUNSWICK TO AZ 68
Breaks the silence.
I talk to people.
I mean-
I didn't- I didn't stop talking to
people who voted for Obama.
You know- I mean- I have friends that voted for Obama.
I didn't say
knock their hat off their head- or tell'em how stupid they were or
anything like that.
We had a difference of opinion.
Sometimes I would say, "Well what's he done for ya?"
And then-
you know- they- they come back with something,
"Oh- oh- oh he killed-he killed Bin Laden." I said, "Oh did he?"
He went out all by himself and had his gun and killed Bin Laden?
[*laughs*]
But we would banter-
Yeah- yeah-
but it was friendly.

LYNN 91
Our best friends are liberals.
And uh-
and if I get
uh you know-all you have to do-
is
mention one word.
As a lady in the pool- I'd forgotten her name
and she tells me
it's Marla.
And I said, "Oh I usually associate names."
And I said, "That was President Trump's
uh second wife."
"Oh don't' uh-
you know-
put me in the- don't even mention my name-

with Trump or…"
Well
I'm not goin' to talk about it anymore am I?
I know how she
feels.
She's angry.
So, if I get a sense
of
you know
where they stand.

MS. T
Thankfully I'm able to talk about it at home
um
you know teachers I think- walk a really fine line of what
they
how-how political they can be in their classrooms.
Uhm
some teachers are very much like,
"our kids never know my, my politics." Um
you know, it-
next year I've—I'll be you know faced with this election again and
you know
I have to make that choice
you know do I
tell the kids that I'm a card carrying Democrat
or do I choose to kind of sit on it and hold it?

HAZEL 72 RETIRED NEWSPAPER REPORTER 1960s RADICAL PROTESTOR
I have no problem
discussing
political areas in which you and I may disagree.
They're just a few areas I can't
discuss.
Nope.
I told my friend Pam and she didn't agree
but I said to her, "this is- this is not-
this is not negotiable."

And every now and so often she slips
and I stop. I say, “No, crossing the line.”
Because she's also a very smart person the way she gets.
[*laughs]* She gets- she sends me emails.
It’s very funny.
She’ll send me the email
and depending on my mood
I will- and she knows- I crack up- I will either send back
read comment- acknowledged comma- ignored
or I will send back to her
I never received this.
[laughs] Because we are good friends and we really do- I'm going to use the word love- we really do love each other very much.

LINDSAY 24
You know it’s kinda funny. I have a lot of
girlfriends that are
very liberal
and I would say also very
not educated on the same issues that, but I mean, it's my job.
[laughs]
And uh
I feel like I- I struggle with
sharing because
uhm- you know- I go back to
if you've really done your homework
and you feel how you feel
I respect it.
And I think that that's really great.
I'd love to have a conversation with you
uhm it doesn’t need to be an argument.

MIMI 48 AMERICAN CITIZEN NIGERIAN DESCENT
I always have to remember
who I am and stand up for
me.
Like with my friend who uhm
she moved to North Carolina and you know that's where she's from- the family

and had always wanted me to come and see her. And-
and I was always like
I had to tell her like
I feel that you completely discounted
me as a person for
you know, just because of who you were voting for and you lived in New York
and you knew who he was.
“But-
but he's better than Hillary!” I'm like, “Okay whatever.”
I won't even go there
but as an immigrant-
as- as a black woman- as a woman- I mean there were so many things that you voted against
me.

40s NY MOM
The worst that's happened to me is I got stuck next to a guy on a plane wearing a MAGA hat.
[laughs]
And then
it was so awful because
I got upgraded
and I was so excited and I got to board the plane first and I was like- it- the comfort plus or whatever-
board the plane and make sure that I don't have to check my bag
and I got on to sit and I’m like, “Ohhhhh.”
Next to a guy with a MAGA hat.
So, then I'm one of the first people on the plane
next to a guy in a MAGA hat in a two-seat thing
and every single person who comes on I'm sure is thinking that I'm with him and I’m like,
“OH GOD!”

INTERVIEWER
When I found out my father in-law voted for Trump
I-
I
couldn’t comprehend it.

I LOVE this man.
He and my mother in-law were coming to the city for a week.
I didn't know what to say
or do.
So, I decided
to just hit it head on and next to their blow-up bed in our living room
I put up
a Greatest Mother In-Law in the World picture
next to her side of the bed
and next to his
a framed picture of Donald Trump.

40s NY MOM
I was …after the election I was posting all the time
all this political stuff and I was like why am I posting?
Shouting into the abyss
or just like
you know-
talking to a mirror
or something.
I'm not-
I'm not saying anything
that the people I'm talking to don't already know.

WHITE FEMALE 53 SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS
My friends and I
on aspects we've chosen- we just- we just don't talk
about politics.
We just-
we'll see posts here and there
uhm we just-
our friendships are more important.
Yeah.
I see their stuff and I'm like whatever
and I'm sure they see mine and they're like
whatever but
we just don't-
it's- it's a- it's a belief.
It's no different than-

one of my closest friend is Jewish. I was raised Catholic.
I'm not anymore but-
I'm gonna dislike her because she's Jewish?

BRUNSWICK TO AZ 68
But I've had arguments with-
arguments-
discussions on Facebook.
Yeah
but I- I was never-
I was never
angry.
I guess because I won I felt like I had won
you know- I'm sorry- this time I won.
You know I-
I suffered through
eight years of Obama,

HAZEL 72
I do not discuss politics on social media end of discussion.

[pause]

AZ NAVY GAL
I think we've reached a time where politics has become really ugly and
I actually lost a friend of ten years
and so I don't know what else we can do.
I mean the vitriol has gotten so
out of control and-
we-
the greatest thing about this country
and life in general is we can all have different opinions right?
[pause]
I mean at the end of the day
my-
I mean for the most part-
my opinion doesn't define me.
It doesn't change who I am as a person. Doesn't change
how I've supported my friends in the past

you know, I mean, you can have disagreements with people
but to just
cut somebody out of your life.

LYNN 91
I've made up my mind. I will not lose
a good friend over politics,
I'll-
I won't back-
you know down or change but
uhm but I can be tolerant.

AZ NAVY GAL
I specifically made a point to NOT talk politics with this one particular friend
because I knew
where she stood here
and then for it to kind of just blow up all at once
and for me to lose a good friend
you know it's-
it was tough.

BRUNSWICK TO AZ 68
I- I- I would never
have
lost a friend
because they voted for Obama.

WHITE FEMALE 53 SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS
I don't understand the friendships that were ruined over it.
And it's-
so my older sister and her family
they're all Republicans. My middle sister
I don't really know. I don't think she really knows. So I really can't say uhm-
she voted for Obama. She wanted a change
and then somebody- things were taken away and she almost lost everything and
our comment was to her,

“So how’d that work out for you?”
I mean
you...she doesn't
know anything about politics- she doesn’t get involved
well then don't vote.
I hate to say that
because it's the American thing to do.
It's not an illegal thing to do-
it's an American thing to do
but
if you don’t know
your two parties
or even your party that
you're supposed to be involved in
jus don’t vote!

WHITE FEMALE 53 SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS, AZ NAVY GAL, LYNN 91, and LINDSAY 24 begin to disengage through this next monologue: take out a phone, a book, headphones etc.

40s NY MOM *(let this monologue build into a verbal attack)*
To me the worst part was-
that-
what-
a majority of white women voted for him- for Trump.
I couldn't-
like I couldn’t believe that as a woman anybody
any woman could go and cast a vote for that person
and you- but that's when you realize that ok
there’s some people that just believe this is normal behavior
this is-
this is acceptable somehow.
That was the hardest part for me was like-
after just being like- this is not acceptable behavior- to have to tell my kids, “oh by the way
that guy-
that was not acceptable behavior- is now our president!”

[pause]

40s NY MOM
[You know] the Times
just did this whole thing where they got 500 people together who represented all
walks of every voter.
They had like one-
one person who represents every voter in America and they got them all together
and
sort of asked them questions and put them in little focus groups and worked them up and-
I mean what a beautiful thing but basically they all came out of it saying,
[pause]
“Yeah, no.
I'm pretty much where I am”.
There were small changes but most people though they moved a little bit on certain subjects
the majority of them came out of it-
the same way they went in.

(all take a breath together, stand and push chairs back, get into next character if needed)

SCENE TEN: 2020

TRANSGENDER AZ WOMAN *(X center)*
There has become a tendency to
vilify
compromise
or vilify those who seek compromise.
And that
is
causing problems
and I- I stand strong for certain things but I also realized that I have to educate people on some things that
are unfamiliar to them- a-
and so-
it may be an oversimplification
right now

but
it
is certainly
a valid description
to say that
one of the major
sources of the conflict
is between
religion
and freedom of expression.
Because I came from an Evangelical background I feel qualified
to discuss this.
I was taught
as an Evangelical that you don't compromise
because if you compromise
then you are
negating
the
devotion
that you're supposed to have
toward your faith.
And I believe that in this
significant battle right now that
contributes to the division of our nation
whereby religion and freedom of expression
are at odds
many in the evangelical camp
refuse to compromise.
[pause]
It's certainly hard on those of us who have to suffer
the
negative results
and consequences
of
their unwillingness to compromise. (X back to chair)

AZ NAVY GAL *(X center-talk to Transgender AZ Woman)*
I don't wanna say that we should go back to
the early seventies

that's not what I'm saying at all.

Transgender AZ Woman X back to chair

But I just- it always-
makes me kinda tilt my head and I go, “I don’t understand what
right don't you have
that a-
that a man does?”
Yeah, I get it you don't want male politicians to be making choices for you- I mean nobody wants anybody to make a choice for you.
Why would you want- why would you want anybody else deciding what you can and can't do.
I get-
why you know-
the feelings that you have. I- I can appreciate that.
I can I can you know- certainly understand that
uhm but yeah it just always goes back to- I don’t understand what-
what rights we don't- we don’t have.
I- I don't feel-
what's the word I'm looking for?
I don’t feel- uhhhh-
I don’t feel kept down-
Oppressed- oppressed. Thank you that’s the word.
I don't- I don't feel that. *(X back to chair)*

WHITE FEMALE 53 SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS (X Center talk to AZ Navy Gal)
What-
what have we lost
since Trump has been in?

AZ Navy Gal X back to chair

So, I-
I think that throughout the years
you know women were in high-powered positions.
You know uhm-
I didn't go to college.

I didn't have to go to college-
again school of hard knocks.
I don't know what New York City is like- I mean- you read about it- but I don't know so
I- I've gained more power in the last three years
because I have more of a voice
and I think men
have no choice but to give us
a chance
because we have a voice. *(X back to chair)*

HAZEL 72 RETIRED NEWSPAPER REPORTER 1960s RADICAL PROTESTOR
(X center- talk to White Woman 53 School of Hard Knocks)
I think we have to accept as Americans
that this polarization has always existed.

White Female 52 School of Hard Knocks X back to chair

This is why I cried-
you know going full circle to the first
comment I made.
Uhm
I don't believe Trump created one racist.
I don't believe he created one anti-Semite.
I believe he made it okay for them to express their feelings.
I think we have to accept that this exists.
I think we have to accept that we're not going to change it.
I think we have to be alert to its existence. *(X back to chair)*

Throughout this last monologue, each woman grabs her characters' rally signs with a short catchphrase from the play.

INTERVIEWER *(X DC)*
I wanted to bring this- these two groups of women together
in a dialogue that's not happening today to see- if we could
understand each other better-
communicate better going forward
because I feel like we- we aren't communicating at all

or if we are it's- it's not healthy.
So, it was an altruistic idea of going- you know like- I'm- I don't know
what I was hoping for I'm
not sure I found any answers
[*pause]*
and that saddens me
but
I'm still glad I took the journey
and I've always found that when you ask a question you rarely find concrete answers-
you usually find more questions.
It's so frustrating.
I like answers.
[*laughs] "*Okay
thank you questions."
But I ask more questions cause it keeps me teachable- it keeps me-
and the more I- whether I agree with them or not-
these women are living real lives. WE ARE ALL living real lives with real life
and uh I don't think life is kind.
I mean it is- it can be very loving and warm
and fantastic but I think
life can be
challenging.
So hearing people's stories behind what they think-
sometimes
[*pause]*
I don't change- it doesn't change
how I see the world- but it does
change how I see them.

All actors cross down stage and form a line on either side of the INTERVIEWER and raise their rally signs. Hold 10 seconds.

BRUNSWICK TO AZ 68
"Just be honest"

LYNN 91
"I put America in my God box"

MS. T
“Kids=Master’s Degree”

WHITE FEMALE 52 SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS
“I have more of a voice”

MIA MY VOICE DOESN’T COUNT
“Susan B. Anthony didn’t do everything”

TRANSGENDER AZ WOMAN
“Is there another side to this story?”

LINDSAY 24
“We’re human”

MIMI 48 AMERICAN CITIZEN NIGERIAN DESCENT
“Put yourself in the conversation”

HAZEL 72 RETIRED NEWSPAPER REPORTER 1960s RADICAL PROTESTOR 40’S
“Right to muggers”

40s NY MOM
“Never lived in their shoes”

AZ NAVY GAL
“My opinion doesn’t define me”

[Black out]
END OF PLAY

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On Border and Identity: A Performative Reflection from an Applied Theatre Project

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ABSTRACT

As an artist-scholar, I query: In what ways does border perform, (dis)connect, alter, shift dissolve and (re)imagine identity? Migration is essential to human existence in this present 'postnormal times' characterized by chaos, contradictions, global displacement and neoliberal realities (Ziauddin, 2010). From voluntary to forced migration, border shifts as living and non-living things move, and it is constantly being re/negotiated. Beyond physical or territorial border navigated in migration, cultures and arts transverse boundaries because people move with cultural practices, beliefs and traditions. For instance, as migrants' cultural practices and art forms trans-border, culture becomes a mobile apparatus that constantly changes and shifts from one form to another. As an autobiographical piece, in this article, I focus on the experience of the individual [me] to explore how my migratory and mobility experiences shape my identity and in turn find expression in my artistic practice. I engaged the notion of root and

routes to articulate the fact that I'm in constant motion of 'shifting identities' (Bhavnani & Phoenix, 1994) and creating my own 'imagined communities' (Anderson, 1991). I focus on my performance in an applied theatre project with refugees, immigrants, and international students in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

INTRODUCTION

This research started as a way of positioning myself, thinking about my identity in the diaspora, and framing my theatre practice haven worked in different socio-economic, political, and cultural contexts. In this article, I engage *roots* and *routes* as a theoretical framework to explore the relationship between place attachment, identity, and mobility as an artist. I consider a complex relationship between these two metaphors through reflecting on the journeys of participating in and creating an applied theatre project with immigrants, refugees, and international students in Victoria, British Columbia especially as an African artist-scholar.

While researchers have largely focused on themes such as the relationship between border and security governance, migration and immigration policy, securitization, historicity, border control and visa regimes, borderland and culture (Dalby, 2020; Gunn, 2019; Luabe, 2019; Mau, Gulzau, Luabe & Zuan, 2015; Saldivar, 2006; Roots, 1996; Johnson & Michaelsen, 1997), there is a limit of artistic interventions in the contemporary landscape of border security and resistance (Amoore & Hall, 2010). There is also still knowledge base around the intersection of border and identity within applied theatre especially as it affects the facilitator/applied theatre practitioner. For instance, Sally Mackey, an applied theatre scholar, observes that 'relationship between place (and space) and applied theatre has been interpreted simply, perhaps too simply, in applied theatre scholarship' (2016, p. 107). Apart from the fact that works happen in non-traditional venues (Prentki & Preston, 2009), too often the focus on participants can exclude the practitioner, the practitioner's identity, and the practitioner's connection to the place and the culture. Thus, in this article, I explore the practitioner's lived experience, identity and relationship to border. I draw on my personal life to investigate ways in which my experiences of migration and mobility shape my identity and

find expression in my artistic practice. Through this autobiographical approach (Reed-Danahay, 2001; Stanley, 1992), I discuss the notions of 'shifting identities' (Bhavnani & Phoenix, 1994), 'imagined communities' (Anderson, 1991) to better understand my *roots* and *routes* and how I conceive, perform and represent border in my practice. I focus on my performance in *Onion Theatre*, an applied theatre project with refugees, immigrants, and international students in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

As an artist-researcher of African descent, my reflection on border, identity and race is both personal and political. My intention does not only touch on the quest for a more just, equitable, diverse, and inclusive (JEDI) society, it puts the practitioner who is also a participant in the project at the centre of the discourse. I inquiry: in what ways does border perform, (dis)connect, alter, shift, dissolve and (re)imagine identity? I focus on some vignettes/stories from my performance to reinforce the *routes* I have taken to either assert, reposition (shift) or reimagine my identity and the impact of my *root* in the process of presenting myself as a mobile (or nomad) yet bordered artist. A critical examination of the cultural *roots* and *routes* I have taken to be who I perceive I am, who I am not and perhaps who I am becoming. Through these stories of personal journey, I argue that the process of identity construction is relational, contextual and ambivalent in which the discourses of race, nationality and culture are constantly emerging, altered, and renewed. These *routes* and their cultural *roots* (place-based and practice-based) are mutually intertwined in these processes because both create a rhizomatic inclination that is connected to any other, heterogeneous and multiple (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: ROOTS AND ROUTES

Root has been a symbolic metaphor for place attachment in different cultures. It is part of a metaphorical system that refers to people's link to place (the soil, the land, etc.), territory, culture and even practice (Lefebvre, 1974; de Certeau, 1984; Malkki, 1992). It also signifies emotional bonds with the physical environment (space/place) and often contain the notion of local community, shared culture, and at times natural identities. More recently, some authors have suggested that the relationship between place, people, and culture may also be thought of

in terms of *routes* taken in constructing identity (Clifford, 1997; Gilroy, 1993; Hall, 1995; 1996; 2003). According to Hall (2003), identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps, instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent, we should think of identity as a "production," which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside representation (Hall, p. 222). Hall proposes dual perspective of thinking around identity—one refers to the "oneness" with a shared culture, history, ancestry and some other commonly shared codes; the other perspective recognizes the transience of "one identity", "one experience" due to the ruptures, disruptions, and discontinuities caused by the 'continuous play of history, culture and power' (p. 225). In the second sense, identity is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being' (p. 225). Identity constructions and presentation for me as an artist-scholar from Africa therefore, is 'a process of negotiation between sites of agency, locally and globally perceived, conceived, or lived spaces of possibilities for belonging and establishing cultural dialogues' (Maguire, 2005, p. 1426).

The above notion of becoming resonates with Benedict Anderson's imagined communities and shifting identities. Anderson's idea of nation or nation-ness from a physical perspective to a cultural viewpoint provides a unique hermeneutic lens to conceptualize identity and nationalism. From an anthropological perspective, Anderson defines nation as 'an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign' (1991, p. 6). Nation is imagined because:

1. the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion;
2. as *limited* because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations;
3. as *sovereign* because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm;
4. as a *community* because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always

> conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. (Anderson, 1991, p. 6)

Thus, if communities emerge through the *roots* and *routes*, then its identities can shift or its practices can evolve into something else. This unveils the constant change that characterizes our world and lend a voice to multi-layered, multivocal, complex, and constantly shifting performative contexts. This shows the intersection of arts and border as 'an in-between period where old orthodoxies are dying, new ones are yet to be born, and very few things seem to make sense' (Ziauddin, 2010, p. 435).

DEFINING BORDER: SETTING SOME PARAMETERS

The word border evokes some sense of movement, stasis, space, processes, policies, and changes. My experience constructed as fractures of human existence is framed within the context of border using *root* and *route* as reference point. First, border as a physical geographical location that is visible and territorial. It can be touched, and it occupies physical space. A physical, geographical, and territorial understanding of border can define one's *root* because it grounds one in a place, that is place attachment. This also means that there is possibility for either stasis or physical mobility or both. The concept of place is commonly used to signify a spatial entity that is experienced and perceived as meaningful either by one person or by a group of people (Canter, 1997).

Secondly, beyond the physical border lies the invisible and intangible border. It resides in the sense of cultural epistemologies, ideologies and philosophies. It is responsible for socio-cultural, politico-economical differentiations. Although this seems to exist at the level of abstract but it translates into how we perceive ourselves and how others perceive with implications on politics and policies, and world systems and governance. Thus, in this sense, border can provoke multiple meanings and diverse implications—from physical to non-physical. The implications of physical and non-physical border whether from personal to political, socio-cultural, or economic deepen the discourse on *roots* and *routes*. For instance, culture that we produce originates from geographical spaces and the process of embodying

such cultural practices can transcend physical spaces. This is why people take culture across different borders and borderland, in the context of my research, people in diaspora such as immigrants and refugees.

Within diasporic discourse, through the interplay of *roots* and *routes*, culture and cultural identity becomes something to preserve and cling onto in face of the migration of people, ideas, goods and capitals, and practices (Hall, 1990; 1996; 1997). Culture defines identity. Thus, the connection of *roots* and *routes*, border and culture reiterate how border alters culture, and how culture alters border. It reinforces ways in which *roots* alter *routes*, and vice versa, and the processes that shift identities. In the context of an artist, it positions the artist in its artistic expressions—both in presentation and representation. It further positions a hybridization of identities as it acknowledges the power of culture at the border and off the border. Culture in this context is viewed as both territorial and non-territory; a bounded system contained in a defined territory, homogenous, heterogeneous, and shared by members of society (Sterling, 2012). *Roots* and *routes* create both mobile and immobile understanding of cultural forms, cultural stereotypes hybridity, identity separation and polarization (Anzaldua, 1987; Rosaldo, 1989; Vila, 2000; 2003). The summit of the understanding of shifting identities through *roots* and *routes* is about finding commonalities and celebrating differences.

METHODS AND MATERIALS: AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND APPLIED THEATRE

I have chosen to engage narrative identity as a methodological tool in this research. *Narrative identity* is a person's internalized and evolving life story, integrating the reconstructed past and imagined future to provide life with some degree of unity and purpose (Singer, 2004). Narrative identity thrives on the notion that human beings are natural storytellers. In fact, people construct and share stories about themselves. They pay attention to particular episodes and periods in their lives and what those experiences mean to them. A person may construct and internalize an evolving and integrative story for life out of the episodic particulars of autobiographical memory. This is what psychologists today call a narrative identity (Singer, 2004). In essence, narrative identity reconstructs the autobiographical past and imagines

the future in such a way as to provide a person's life with some degree of cohesion, purpose, and meaning (McAdams & McLean, 2013). Thus, a person's life story synthesizes episodic memories with envisioned goals, creating a coherent account of identity in time. Through narrative identity, people convey to themselves and to others their identity—who they are now, how they came to be, and where they think their lives may be going in the future. As an autobiographical piece, I reconstruct the autobiographical past, perceives the present and imagines the future' in such a way as to provide a person's life with some degree of unity, purpose, and meaning (Coffey, 2011). Thus, a person's life story synthesizes episodic memories with envisioned goals, creating a coherent account of identity in time' (McAdams & McLean, 2013, p.233). This methodology lends itself to applied theatre because it involves storytelling (Prendergast & Saxton, 2009), and engages performance to humanize experiences. The Onion Theatre (OT) is an applied theatre project for many reasons: It involved using theatre and drama skills for the purposes of teaching, exploring human experiences, creating space to discuss issues that can foster social change, and building a sense of community (Prentki & Nicola, 2021; Breed & Prentki, 2021; Taylor, 2006). OT is process-driven and I devised personal stories of participants in an ethical way to create a performance that focused on immigrants' experience (Freebody, et al, 2018; Prendergast & Saxton, 2009).

ONION THEATRE (OT)

The Onion Theatre (OT), a three-year community theatre project in Victoria, Canada, sets out to create safe and positive spaces for youth—newly-arrived, international students, settlers, and migrants—where they can have diverse conversations about social justice issues in an ever-changing world and culture. Over the three years (2017-2019), the project involved more than 20 participants from over 10 countries with stories about their experiences now that they live in Canada. Specifically, it focused on three central ideas that participants identified as relevant in the resettling process in Canada: *Arriving*, *Becoming* and *Belonging*—what it means to arrive in a new place, settle in and belong (Balfour, et al, 2015). The subject matter also has broader implication in the ongoing conversation in North America

around justice, equity, diversity and inclusion (JEDI), systemic racism, and social justice for minority groups. Participants shared their lived experiences and it inspired devised performances I directed and performed in the final performance. It was performed in community spaces with participants who wanted to perform. We did not perform in 2019 due to the needs of the group—many participants needed to attend to personal needs, and we had to stop the project when they felt they could no longer continue. In total, we performed 8 times for over 900 audience members in public spaces in Victoria. And we secured funding from different organizations.

Here are some excerpts from Onion Theatre.

Story One

Names. It starts from and always comes back to names. The one you call yourself, the ones that others call you. My name is... My mother once told me: "Your name is entirely yours. Your name was given to you for a purpose… it means something, not to you alone but to your place of birth… At times, it can summarize or even prophesy what's ahead… Your name goes with you everywhere, anywhere, and will always connect you with your family." I have gotten used to different versions of my name...Taiwo, Tiawo, Taiwu'… I have pondered many times. 'Does it matter? I have also been asked 'Why does it matter'?

I have heard stories from immigrants and how their names were misspelt, mispronounced and dismissed. "This does not matter we tell ourselves… we get used to it" I was told by many. "But what we can't be used to is when our names decides whether we are called back for that job interview or not, if we are considered intelligent or dismissed as unintelligible, or whether we are racially being profiled or not. It is important we are seen fully… in every aspect…"

Story Two

***Taiwo**: Certain identities, constructs and ideas have been imposed on some countries due to moments in their history, and citizens of such countries are seen as terrorists, prostitutes, and poverty-stricken beggars… Among other things, where I come*

from is known for corruption… Trust me, I am not here to defend atrocities that some citizens (leaders and followers alike) from and in my country continually perpetrate. I am here to defend myself. I am from Nigeria but does that mean I am corrupt?

We make it look as if everything is perfect here [in Canada and other 'developed' countries] as if there is no corruption, marginalization, displacement and greed here… the list is endless… I think these inhumane attributes are part of human nature and are the cause of our problem in the world… In fact, every country has its own scum, we only need to be honest and address it.

[…]

The Other ENTERS.

***Taiwo**: (cont.)The first time an alibi said…*

***Me**: Taiwu, you know I have heard that Nigerians are corrupt but you are truthful and honest.*

***Taiwo**: To him it was a compliment, but to me, it was insulting and demeaning because I have been seen from the perspective of the Other just like some still think Africa is a country…*

So I asked him, how would you feel if you were seen in the shadow of the other? Have you imagined how your life will be if I relate with you based on the assumption, I have heard about the region you come from?

By the way, my name is not Taiwu or Taiwooo, my name is Taiwo… It is a name given to the first child of the twins in Yoruba land. Get it right because it means so much to me.

Story Three

I am from another country. I was forced to leave because of the war… everybody knows about the crisis. Anyway, one day, I was at the bus stop waiting for the bus when someone asked me where I came from because I did not look or dress like I was from here… I told the person my country and we talked a lot about many things; apparently, the person has visited my country. It was a long conversation because the bus was late that day for some reason… I was advised on how to go around, and one of the things the person told me, which I found helpful, was that when I apply for jobs, I should find a shorthand version of my name that is easily pronounced so that I can get a job… I laughed and laughed because I have never heard that before… but you know what? I tried it and it worked. I am grateful someone told me that…

Story Four

Here's an experience I had at an airport some years ago.

Me: '*So tell me more about yourself', the immigration officer asked me 'I'm a Nigerian. Born and raised in Ile-Ife, (South West). From Yoruba tribe. I can speak, and arguably read and write in Yoruba. English language. A Christian. An artist. From a family of seven. I had my post-secondary education (undergrad/grad) in Plateau state and Kwara state and both states are in North Central. I don't speak Hausa language but understand to some degree. I am an artist and I have my own theatre company—Theatre Emissary International*…

Officer: *Oh you are Yoruba. Back in college I had a colleague who was Yoruba and he introduced me to some Nigerian literature. Beautiful writings. He told me that Yoruba people are bookworm… you must be a bookworm with the conference you are going…*

[he counts the number of visas on my passport]

You have been to many countries… over ten… [writes something on his paper… raises his head and continues] You

studied in Jos, eh? So you know the Boko Haram people… I follow the news in Nigeria… not good at all man…

Me: *[laugh] 'I've not seen anyone that knows Boko Haram people' I replied. [pause…and continue] 'I hope the war against Africans, Asians and other migrants in this country come to an end.'*

He smiled and returned my passport. I asked myself… What would it mean to be seen in full?

Story Five

I have been asked the same question: 'Where are you from?' The first time I was asked that question, I was angry because I thought people asked that to get at me or make me feel uncomfortable. Later on, I realized this was not the case in all situations. Now, I try to understand the intention behind asking. For some, it is based on a honest curiosity while for others, it is because they want to profile you, and for some people, they ask out of courtesy and as part of an unspoken rule in human interaction. I think each reason for asking is legitimate; after all, I am not from here, I only moved here voluntarily a few years ago.

DISCUSSION

Performing Self

In many ways, my experiences shape my research. I centered my experience as a practitioner for the purpose of humanizing experiences and creating critical dialogue on diverse and multi-layered issues in our society. This aligns with Park-Fuller's words that in autobiographical narrative performances,

> the performer often speaks about acts of social transgression. In doing so, the telling of the story itself becomes a transgressive act—a revealing of what has been kept hidden, a speaking of what has been silenced—an act of reverse discourse that struggles with the preconceptions borne in the air of dominant politics. (2000, p. 26)

As a practitioner who participated in OT, presenting my experience provided me the opportunity to give a witness account of past experiences (Adams & Holman Jones, 2008). In this case, I am not presenting the other, or writing *about* or f*or* the other. I am writing about myself and how my lived experience shapes my art. This creates the opportunity for me to be a reflective practitioner inquiring into actions and narrative of the past (Farrell, 2007). It is deeply rooted in the lived experiences and present realities of people's culture and existence. Also like any ethnographical research, this research seeks to understand cultural experience (Harrison, 2018) in this context, my experience of migration and border. For instance, through my migration experience, I realized that my relationship with the physical place and cultural space is shifted and altered (Mackey, 2016, p.107). For instance, some of my experiences have been centered around my identity while some have given the rupture and displacement queries such as who am I? and where do I belong? if examined from a modernist perspective because issues of identity are considered part of the hallmark of modern consciousness.

OT involved more than myself. However, I interpreted the materials (personal stories), analyzed the social conditions in which the related actions and stories took place, reconstructed the subjective explanations and abstracted the results of the autobiographical research in individual case theories and generalization on comparison of the individual cases (Busse, et al, 2000). The stories are personal and through the reconstruction and analysis, the project creates knowledge as an embodied, critical, and ethical exploration of culture and experiences (Ellis, 1991). It is an investigative journey of personal discovery to understand cultural ethos. Similar to Jones, et al, 2013, I 'locate[d] the personal in the field, in the writing, and in the political contexts of the research' (p. 19). OT is rooted in self-reflexivity, an openness to honest and deep reflection about ourselves, our relationships with others, and how we want to live. It is a process of self-discovery and critically engaging daily experiences. It is a way of being in the world and knowing about the world. One that requires 'living consciously, emotionally, and reflexively' (Jones, et al, 2013, p. 10). It encourages me to examine myself and consider 'how and why we think, act, and feel as we do' (Jones, et al, 2013, p. 10). Similar to auto-ethnographers, I observed and interrogate what I think and

believe, and challenge my own assumptions, defenses, fears biases, sentiments and insecurities, egos etc.

Moving in-between…

> What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.
>
> Spoken by Juliet, *Romeo & Juliet,* Act 2 Scene 2

The language of reference and negotiating social interconnection and identity construction is central to the postcolonial and post-modern divide privilege the malleability, fluidity, hybridization of identities (Burke & Stets, 2009; Friedman, 1998; Hall & du Gay, 1996; Bhabha, 1994). The intersectionality or connection to multiple identities and realities—from race, age, abilities, sexual orientations, and spiritual understanding etc. These realities are portrayed by response to the way my names were mispronounced or how I present myself in a given time. The politics of representation plays out in the linguistic expressions to emphasize the similarities and the differences amongst an imagined cultural group—in my context as an African (Hall, 1996). On many occasions, I had to pretend my name was pronounced correctly.

Stories from the *Onion Theatre Project* reiterates how language is both a tool for personal and political bordering process (Afolabi, 2020). Through the interactions of participants, some ideological differences of the dominant cultures were shown. The politics of and the fight by the super-powers for the continent of Africa and some part of middle East was expressed as language is not only a barrier in the discourse on diversity and inclusion; it is a metric for measuring who belongs and who does not. For instance, some colonized countries had to neglect their indigenous language to adopt those of their colonizers. Considering the fact that you are gauged and measured by how you say what you say, that is, choice of words, grammatical structures, syntax and how you sound (accent), emphasis is on learning the foreign languages. Language is in the heart of people's culture; no wonder there are diverse language tests to measure language competence and to determine who fits into the system and who does not. For instance, participants in the project shared stories about their journeys to improving their English language because language had

impact on the quality of their lives. They could not get good jobs which could have helped their household. Language can define our identities, can create both shared and personal spaces with its political implications. Language includes, excludes and transverses border.

Furthermore, the politics of language is evident in the world. Linguistic border is flagrant in many former colonies. For instance, many countries in West Africa can be identified by its national language which connect them to their colonial ancestry. Nigeria and Ghana have English as national language (because they were colonized by Britain) while Cote D'Ivoire and Burkina Faso among others have French as national language (because they were colonized by France). Although their pre-colonial heritages did not have Britain or France, these countries have been defined by the colonized even from a language standpoint. The root is gradually shifting through its route of new forms of colonization and many indigenous languages are going into extinction. This is not peculiar to Africa, it is evident in other places such as the Balkans in Europe, Aboriginals in Australia and the Indigenous people in the Amazon, Canada and Latin America among others.

CONCLUSION: THE IMPLICATION FOR MY PRACTICE

As an applied theatre practitioner from Nigeria who now resides in Canada, my experience resonates with Hall's idea that identity is contingent and not ahistorical or immutable because the 'the continuous "play" of history, culture and power' shapes identity (1996, pp. 111-112). For instance, while I did not live in the colonial era in Nigeria, neocolonial impact is evident in Nigeria. From cultural imperialism to economy interference and globalization etc. Also, this reality continues to provide me some historical context to many countries that experienced colonialism or imperialism such as the Commonwealth nations. For instance, although the methods and parameter used in Nigeria's colonization was different from Canada, I could see some similarities between Nigeria's colonial experience and that of the Indigenous Peoples of Canada. The focus on the practitioner shifts the experience from a mere project to an opportunity to share similar experience with other participants. Working on issues that participants and the practitioners have similar experience can provide a reasonably straightforward understanding of the relationship

between applied theatre, place and space and the familiar concept of safe space. Also, it can reduce ethical dilemma since there may be shared language, reference points and connections. From my experience this is one of the challenges many practitioners encounter on topics such as JEDI, cultural mis/appropriation and mis/representation. I have to state that I do not suggest that practitioners should only engage in project they have personal experience, rather, an awareness of ways in which the practitioner is connected or not connected to a topic is important and valuable. And the same way the practitioner is outward-facing by writing about or reflecting on the experiences of others (participants), the practitioner can be inward-facing by examining their own experience.

My stories have been constructed as fractures and fractions from human existence as framed in identifying *root* and *route*. Like many immigrants, my routes continue to mix or intersect with my root. My identity has become inseparably because both worlds carry the dichotomy between notions of being and becoming. My *root* and *routes* continue to shape and inform who I am becoming.

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Aesop's Idols: Nationalization of Classic Texts to Create a Culture of Inclusion

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ABSTRACT

The Westside Inclusive Theatre Company (WIT) was initially created in 2010 by, with, and for students as a way to build community and tackle oppression together through theatre. A group of advanced theatre students at a public high school in Houston chose to partner with excluded special education students to create and interpret theatre, art and dance in an inclusive environment. All participants (mainstreamed, life-skills, special education and regular education) worked together to teach, learn, and create. WIT has since developed into a company dedicated not only to teaching life skills through theatre, but also to creating an inclusive community.

This narrative of practice highlights the methods used to facilitate, assess and stratify learning outcomes in order to create a culture of inclusion. Case studies from the devising and performance of Aesop's Idols *are used to illustrate how and what constitutes an inclusive culture. The current WIT model focuses on Augusto Boal's*

nationalization of classic texts to reinforce vocational/life skills training and generate alternative communication methods. The use of peer-mentoring, progressive pedagogies and applied theatre aesthetics derives ownership and authenticity within the performance praxis. Increases in cognitive and vocational skill development occur across the spectrum of participants.

> It is from our responses to the exigencies [urgent needs or demands] of life that culture is born. Culture is the *doing*, the *how it is done*, the *for what* and *for whom* it is done. (Boal, 2006, p. 100)

In today's world, the average high school student in the U.S. faces a range of exigencies that may increase a student's risk: gang affiliation, low levels of school engagement, the threat of gun violence, low parental education, work or family responsibilities, problematic or deviant behavior, poverty, drug or alcohol abuse, teen pregnancy and/or a lack of available resources—all which can result in dropping out of school. Adding a disability, whether social, physical, cognitive, emotional or mental, compounds the stress and trauma faced by many youth in the public school setting. Students are bullied, stigmatized, isolated in special needs classrooms, and taught with low expectations and often by burnt-out "special education" teachers. Both special education (including life-skills) and regular education students are taught based on standardized tests, school funding, and state requirements. As Freire would say, they are receptacles regurgitating facts: "suffering from narration sickness...the student records, memorizes and repeats without perceiving" (Freire, 1970, p. 72). The Westside Inclusive Theatre (WIT) Company uses drama processes with mainstream and special education students together in order to facilitate learning and create a culture of inclusion. This narrative of practice analyzes the creation of an inclusive culture through the "*doing*, the *how it is done*, the *for what* and *for whom* it is done" of the WIT model, arguing that the nationalization of classic texts within an inclusive theatre praxis creates a bridge to understanding disability—a culture of inclusion—and thus creates opportunities for education, advocacy, and development of cognitive and vocational skills.

WHAT IS WIT? APPLICABILITY OF THE WIT MODEL

A high school auditorium is packed with parents, social workers, teachers and peers waiting patiently for the show to begin. As the lights in the house dim, two students enter center stage; one is wearing oversized earphones to help with overstimulation. He skips, jumps and paces the stage with energy—looking out to the audience and back to his partner, occasionally yelping or screaming. Though this is his first time performing for an audience, this particular manic action stems from his autism spectrum disorder, rather than just performance anxiety. His partner gently takes his hand and gestures to a grand 9-foot story book on the side of the stage. Together they open the larger-than-life book, and he immediately calms down, grabs a handful of markers and begins to color the pictures in the book. This is the opening scene of WIT'S most recent performance, *Aesop's Idols.*

Westside Inclusive Theatre Company (WIT), was created by, with and for students at a large, metropolitan, public high school in Houston, Texas. WIT pairs advanced theatre students from mainstream curriculums with peers enrolled in special needs, vocational or life-skills classrooms. The goal of WIT is including students with special needs in the activities of drama and theatre to develop and create performances, reinforcing education of life-skills (from the broader ideas of collaboration, literacy, self-advocacy, self-care to specifics such as dating, money management, laundry, or cleaning). The outcomes for all students, mainstreamed and special needs, include developing creativity, problem-solving, teamwork, leadership and performance skills (including devising, acting, directing, design, and public speaking). WIT was formed on the anthropological view of disability as the "social reactions of the community to people with disabilities as the disabling force, rather than implicating the bodily differences as the true source of disability," which changes the focus from human behavior of people with disabilities to the social environment of the population at large (Shuttleworth & Kasnitz, 2004). The storybook opens, and as the first two partners begin to color, the sound of Lady Gaga's "Bad Romance" floods the auditorium, as thirty-some students emerge from all sides of the stage and auditorium singing along: "A-A-Aesop's fables—tell me a story…."

Image 1: An opening dance scene of *Aesop's Idols.*

The students onstage encompass the U.S. high school stereotypes. Among the 30+ performing artists are students from life-skills classrooms with autism, Down's syndrome and learning impairments. There are also class leaders about to graduate and head to ivy league universities along with mainstream students struggling with teen pregnancy and gang affiliation. Some are refugees and immigrants who are beginning to learn English as a second language, some read at the university level, some at grade level, and some are still learning to write the letters in their name. Some of the scholars write poetry or beatbox rap verses, others use sign language or adapted communication technology to vocalize. A few are nonverbal, while others prefer not to speak in public. Disability culture anthropologists state: "Disability exists when people experience discrimination on the basis of perceived functional limitations" (Kasnitz & Shuttleworth, 2001, p. 2). Through the dramatic process and culminating performance, the WIT model attempts to defy discrimination for all learners, regardless of ability, class, gender, race, language. We are creating an inclusive culture.

The work being done within the WIT model is not just beneficial to

students with diagnosed disabilities—be it autism or cerebral palsy. Using the anthropological understanding of disability as a social construct, any (and every) secondary student could be perceived to have stigma and discrimination to overcome. Drug use, gang affiliation, anxiety, self-consciousness, depression, the pressure to succeed, and many other stressors can and often do affect all learners. The spectrum of abilities onstage is vast in many ways, from academic to self-care, communication and mobility, but in this moment, they are all creating culture together.

THE DOING: NATIONALIZING OF CLASSIC TEXTS

The nationalization of classic texts, a concept developed by Augusto Boal (1979), is a way of using applied theatre techniques to adapt, rewrite and restructure classic texts-such as fables, fairytales, and folklore, or Shakespeare, Sophocles or history—to fit the needs, interests and concerns of the community involved. The definition of "nationalization" is literally the transferring of private assets into public assets. This is exactly what Boal theorizes: transferring the private, seemingly outdated or irrelevant assets of a classic text, into a relevant, meaningful, entertaining public asset for the community involved. For this case study—WIT nationalized *Aesop's Fables* to create the performance of *Aesop's Idols*. Through a dramatic process, classic tales such as the *Tortoise and the Hare* were adapted to appeal to the life experiences of high schoolers, and specifically, high schoolers in a diverse, inclusive classroom community. For example, the tortoise and the hare were no longer just running a race, but competing for praise and attention from their peers; the fable was transformed into an investigation on who had the more expensive shoes. The cheering crowd encouraged them, and the tortoise, played by a mobility-challenged student with cerebral palsy, demonstrated her resourcefulness and creativity in overcoming obstacles differently than her peers.

Why use the nationalization of classic texts for an inclusive drama praxis? Though different theorists and facilitators develop and devise work in a variety of ways, the WIT Company chose to use Boal's nationalization of classic texts as the foundation of the work:

1. Classic texts are universal and widely known. This creates a comfortable learning environment for students transgressing cognitive, physical, cultural and language barriers.
2. There is a multitude of materials available for classic texts that differentiate levels of learning and comprehension. For example, Aesop's Fables often include pictures, all levels of reading books, cartoons, videos and websites that share the base stories. The ability to find a variety of inspirational material allows accommodation for the spectrum of student abilities, including those who cannot read, who need visual cues for comprehension, or who might have English as a second language.
3. Classic texts are easily adaptable. They can be as simple or complex as needed to fit the community. The characters in classic texts tend to be archetypes—the king, the trickster, the hard-worker, the poor, the rich. They can be used in any context or culture, and distilled into a moral or message that can be applied to many settings and circumstances.
4. Classic texts give an inclusive company a foundation to build upon, and quite often, through the dramatic process, the story is completely changed and only vaguely familiar to the original classic work.

The universal nature of the classic text narrative, when used within the theatre praxis, inherently becomes a way to defy stigma, to establish abilities, and to reveal how disability is addressed within a culture. Not only do these adapted classical stories teach the audience about disability culture, but in creating the performance, students experience hands-on ways to modify and adapt learning with and for their peers. This is further discussed in the following ethics and aesthetics of inclusive drama, or the *how it is done.*

How It Is Done: The Ethics & Aesthetics of Inclusive Drama

Initially, the WIT students could perceive a great difference between the world of *Aesop's Fables* and their own world; and would not see its "relevance." And, plainly, its status as a "classic" would not make it any more pertinent to them. We combined our interpretations of the classic stories with Boalian and Brechtian techniques to explore their

relevance. In the same manner as Boal's "nationalization" of classics brought to Brazilian audiences, so could the 'nationalization' (or 'high school-ization') of works (such as *Aesop's Fables*) for an inclusive high school curriculum concurrently teach students about classic literature, as well as their world and each other.

We adapted the principal goal of Boal's Joker System, which is to "disrupt the singular reality of the world as it is represented in the dramatic text in order to investigate alternative ways of representing and interpreting that world" (Boal, 1979, p.174). The objective, Boal notes, is to "present simultaneously in the performance, both the play and its analysis" (Boal, 1979, p. 174-75). The Joker System relies on a

Image 2: Peer mentors work together during a performance.

handful of basic Brechtian techniques that we also used in creating *Aesop's Idols*:

1. an "alienated" acting style, designed to "reduce" dramatic characters to a relatively simple "social mask" and to distance the actors from characters;
2. continuous role reversal or switching, such that characters are played by several actors, and actors play several characters;

3. stylistic and genre eclecticism from scene to scene (or even within a single scene), with little or no regard for a unified production style or tone; and
4. the use of music as an independent "discourse" to complement, supplement, subvert, or contradict the meanings expressed in the text and performance. (Boal, 1979)

In addition to Boal and Brecht, WIT capitalizes on the work being done within drama in education and with special education theorists to create and devise performances. Key fundamentals utilized by the WIT model incorporate inclusion, peer-mentoring, multidisciplinary pieces and ownership.

Inclusion, as explained by Hargrave, is more than just the involvement of learners with disabilities. The goal of inclusion "ultimately raises the question of what we think of the good life for ourselves as human beings, and whether there is a place for people with [disability] in that life […] not so much what we can do for them, but whether or not we want to be with them. Ultimately, it is not citizenship, but friendship that matters" (Hargrave, 2015, p.17). WIT constantly examines and explores ways to include learners of all abilities, for if a learner cannot participate, how then can he/she learn? Inclusion is not simply about physical proximity; it is about intentionally planning for the success of all students. The most effective form of inclusion within the WIT methods has been peer-mentoring.

Peer-mentoring (Kempe & Tissot, 2012; Cattanach, 1996; McCurrach & Darnley, 1999; Saur & Johansen, 2013; Trowsdale & Hayhow, 2015) is the process of pairing students of varying abilities together to achieve outcomes. The inclusion of typically developing peer models can facilitate academic learning and improve social functioning while improving behavior in naturalistic settings for individuals with neurodevelopmental disabilities (Corbett et al., 2010). For example: Joshua is nonverbal and on the autism spectrum. His form of autism includes the trait of echolalia—wherein he often repeats the last words of whatever is said to him. If one says, "Josh is a terrific dancer," he repeats "Josh is a terrific dancer." Joshua played the part of the Frog King. Initially, his peer group tried to write his lines on large posters that he could hold up at appropriate times. This worked quite well for a while, until Joshua grew bored with it. He then partnered with his peer-buddy, and both played the role of the Frog King. The peer

mentor would say a line, and Joshua would repeat it. However, we became aware that Joshua's life skills teachers were trying to decrease the echolalia behavior, and working to improve his communication skills with verbal cues and gestures. The speech teacher suggested we try to get Joshua to complete lines that the peer-mentor would begin. For example, the peer-mentor might say "My name is…" "Joshua," completed Joshua. The peer-mentor worked with Joshua, teaching him to complete most lines to be uttered by the Frog King. In that way, they worked together to serve as Co-Kings.

During the rehearsal of this process, the peer mentors realized that unknown to the teachers, Josh would also complete lyrics of favorite songs when prompted—especially Disney lyrics. Throughout the devising and rehearsing of their scene, the group created moments where Josh could fill in the blank, or complete the lyrics to create dialogue. This peer-mentoring allowed for all students to be independent of teachers and therapists (Kempe & Tissot, 2012). Additional support systems were included to allow all students access to the dramatic process, including modifications, visual cues, side-coaching, prompting, group work, imitation, multisensory exercises and addition of props and costumes (Kempe, 1996; Cattanach, 1996; McCurrach & Darnley, 1999; Bailey, 2010; Sheratt & Peter, 2002; O'Sullivan, 2016; Peter, 1995; Ramamoorthi & Nelson, 2011). The peer-mentor system structures learning, but more importantly, keeps the work inclusive and fulfills Hargrave's goal of building friendships and contributing to the culture of inclusion. These peer-relationships frequently continue outside of the WIT rehearsals, bringing the inclusive culture into other classrooms and social spaces.

The aesthetics of inclusive drama are one of many ways to spotlight the talents and abilities of the inclusive company (see Tomlinson, 1982; Kempe, 2010; Bailey, 2010; McCurrach & Darnley, 1999). Ownership is critical, because in order to showcase the abilities of the group, then the group must take responsibility for all that is onstage. The idea of ownership (Freire, 1996; Bowell & Heap, 2001; Heathcote, 1995) allows the learners to control and guide their experience together. In order to allow inclusion, the WIT model creates "multidisciplinary pieces" (Lipkin & Fox, 2001, p. 124) served by a "rich eclecticism" (Hargrave, 2015, p. 229). The "episodic nature of the piece, and its reliance on movement, music, and constant shifts between the types of dialogue and teamwork occurring has Brechtian

underpinnings, with a similar bow towards the audience" (Lipkin & Fox, 2001, p. 131). In order to tell the story, the scenes contain dialogues, music with lyrics changed in popular songs, dances, and games played onstage; all created through peer mentoring with the foundation of Aesop's Fables. In the WIT model, everything was made by and with class participants. This created an eclectic hodgepodge of design. Costumes were sourced, sewn, cut, glued, stapled and glittered by each group as they devised their pieces. The set was built with recycled materials, paper, cardboard, original artwork, and colored or painted by the members of the group.

FOR WHAT: COGNITIVE AND VOCATIONAL LIFE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Cognitive skill development is inherent in the educational drama process. Students and theorists indicate that drama education enhances skills such as confidence, collaboration, teamwork, thinking, literacy, remembering, paying attention, and problem solving, to name a few. (Lipkin & Fox, 2015; O'Sullivan, 2016; Corbett et. All, 2010; Ramamoorthi & Nelson, 2011; Jindal-Snape & Verttraino, 2007). Throughout Aesop's Idols, the most significant skill improvement acknowledged in each participant, regardless of ability, was relationship-building with peers.

Vocational and life-skills are specifically taught and reinforced through both the process and performance of inclusive theatre. Vocational and life skills curriculums are guiding forces for WIT performances, and considered through each step of the process. For example, in *Aesop's Idols*, one devising exercise was for groups of students to create a company that the characters in their fable might own, or where they might work. *The Tortoise and the Hare* group decided that the hare would own a competitive sports shoe company. Working on marketing skills, they created posters, a commercial, and presentation for the shoe company. Each student then created his/her own personal CV/resume, and took turns interviewing for a job at each of the created companies. This gave each student actual experience in job interviews, as well as the opportunity to be a supervisor looking for people to hire. Additionally, the commercials created for this lesson were included during the "commercial break" of the performance.

In developing and creating scenes, we strive to incorporate skills such as cleaning, getting dressed, counting money, and other 'life skills.' If the life skills curriculum is working on laundry, then each group tries to add laundry skills, such as folding or ironing, into their scene. Monique—who played the milk maid—was not responding well to doing laundry in her life skills class. But in a peer setting, with her peer-mentors and her friends all trying to fold and iron while in character—Monique could accomplish every task. The group decided to incorporate laundry skills into their performance scene, and with the repetition of rehearsal, seeing/learning different ways to fold and iron, Monique became a laundry pro, as well as a sassy, fashion-obsessed milk maid. I am proud to say that her laundry skills have come in handy and after aging out of public school, she secured a job at a local salon, where she is paid to wash and fold the towels, while learning other skills from stylists. Vocational and life skills development does not just apply to the special needs learners—many of the mainstream students have gone on to study special education, teaching, and therapies that they attribute directly to their positive experiences within the WIT class.

FOR WHOM IT IS DONE: THE PERFORMERS, THE AUDIENCE, THE FUTURE

The dramatic process of inclusive theatre is done for all students within the WIT Company, but looking back to the anthropological idea of disability as a social construct—that disability exists when people face discrimination based on *perceived* functional limitations—the creation of a culture of inclusion branches much farther than that. The audience at a WIT performance, including parents & families, teachers, therapists, social workers, and fellow classmates—are literally *for whom* it is done. The performance is designed to involve the community at large (McCurrach & Darnley, 1999; Lipkin & Fox, 2001). Inviting the whole high school community to witness the finished product, the skills, abilities, and achievements of the students are acknowledged and appreciated. Confidence is improved and accomplishment is savored. But also important is the modeling of successful techniques and unique perspectives and processes that can come together to create an inclusive future.

CONCLUSION: CREATING A CULTURE OF INCLUSION

"It is from our responses to the exigencies [urgent needs or demands] of life that culture is born" (Augusto Boal, 2006, p. 100). A culture of inclusion is being born from responses to the needs and demands of both mainstream and special needs learners, and this inclusive culture is being spread outside the rehearsal room and school hallways. As WIT ventures into its 7th year, we are proud that many of our alumni have continued inclusive theatre work in their churches, universities and homes. Some students have gone on to study special education, and are working in centers for adults with disabilities. Friendships have been maintained, and past and present members of the company continue to support each other. Although inclusive theatre offerings are rare in American public schools, WIT is by no means the only inclusive theatre company, and this culture of inclusion is slowly being born internationally as theatre practitioners continue to research and advance ways to include all types of citizens in the drama process.

Image 3: Celebrating a culture of inclusion onstage.

Aesop's Idols ends with all of the fables and characters in a state of chaos, battling over which themes are most important or relevant.

As the chaos builds, the two students who initially opened and colored the large storybook quickly close the book. The ensemble of characters is silenced and frozen. The two narrators reopen the cover, throwing the cast back to the beginning and a chorus of “a-a-aesop’s fables, tell me a story.” The cast bows and proceeds to celebrate the culture they have created. In the actual performance, Jorge, the student on the autism spectrum with the headphones to prevent overstimulation, had fallen asleep onstage. Whether he was reacting to overstimulation or boredom, his partner was left to perform both of their duties. When the time came to slam the book shut, the sudden silence awoke Jorge from his slumber. He looked around at his frozen-in-place classmates, and abruptly jumped to his feet to help reopen the book. The music swelled, and he joined the celebrations onstage with gusto. This quite possibly illustrates one of the morals from Aesop’s Fables: that, in terms of inclusion as an educator or learner; “*Together everyone achieves more!”*

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On Deepening Identity Issues by Staging Neil Simon's *The Gingerbread Lady* with Young People

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ABSTRACT

In theater practice, the concept of human identity can be explored both as a phenomenon and a communicative act. The theoretical framework that merges the phenomenological and semiotic approach provides tools for young people to increase awareness of the overlapping narratives that underlie complex and multilayered human experiences, addressing identity and social justice issues while focusing on the concept of diversity. These self-reflective concerns are of critical importance to the contemporary postcolonial, multicultural and interconnected world.

This paper demonstrates the effectiveness of staging Neil Simon's US play The Gingerbread Lady *with young people, focusing on a European perspective. I will be providing that the play has enabled a collaborative and creative process, challenging participants' both individual and collective identity concerns. High school students have increased self-consciousness towards their personal narratives derived*

from the multifaceted social systems in which they live, allowing discussions and comparisons to emerge between the US social system represented on stage, and the European one. In this elective theater course, they have embodied physical, intellectual and emotional experiences by staging characters who address sexist, LGBTQ and racial issues.

> A performance is declarative of our shared humanity, yet it utters the uniqueness of particular cultures. (Victor Turner, as cited in Schechner & Appel, 1990)

INTRODUCTION

In this paper, I will explain a pedagogical practice that provides tools for young people to increase awareness of the narratives that underlie complex, multilayered human identities. I accomplish this by addressing issues of social justice through focusing on the concept of diversity in the staging of theatrical performances.

I am a teaching artist at Liceo Cantonale di Lugano, a high school in Lugano, Switzerland, a local European microcosm that belongs to a multicultural nation which is politically and economically in connection to the whole planet. In opposition to this reality, in the social and political practices of my region both the global perspective and the assumption on diversity are taken for granted and become colour-blind issues. Decisions are very rarely made with regard to different nationalities, cultures and ethnicities, other than when they are considered a problem to be erased.

In fact, I face the slogan “I/We come first” as a political and social statement built to assert the supremacy of a nation or a specific community in the confrontation with diversity and otherness. Similar to “America First”, the slogan recently restored by Trump’s presidency, some politicians in Cantone Ticino, the southern region of my country that borders Italy, claim: “Prima i nostri!” — “Ours first!”, with the idea of cutting out “the other” in favor of “those” who belong to this region and its supposedly sealed-off community, considering the fact that “national identity is not given, it is something to be defined, conquered,

and secured" (Szatkowski, 2019, p. 17) when certain communities feel a danger. In this ideology, economical and social issues dangerously turn in less or more covered xenophobia. But the core of Western education lies in the Enlightenment philosophy of the eighteenth century, which emphasizes freedom, equality, and brotherhood as fundamental principles in politics, society and law. Tolerance and acceptance of diversity are therefore cornerstones for understanding oneself and the world. For these reasons, I educate my students to think in terms of communities, national histories, and race to build openness to otherness.

In leading an elective theater course, I challenge the slogan "I come first" to dismantle it. The course aims at including and welcoming difference because it opens up the possibility of sharing one's humanity instead of asserting the primacy of one person or the supremacy of a community over others. As I will show, this is possible even if, paradoxically, in front of spectators performers emphasize their presence (Féral & Bermingham, 2002; Zarrilli, 2004) in "empty spaces" (Brook, 1996) through their bodies, objects, clothes, music, sounds, words and voices as props, costumes (Reynelt, 2006) and stories to tell (Fuchs, 1985).

The European perspective in facing the complex reality of postcolonialism and multiculturalism is discussed by staging the first act of Neil Simon's *The Gingerbread Lady*. The US social justice issues are represented in Simon's play, and I thematize that the United States had been a colony of the continent where I live. For this reason, I consider that we should all feel a connection and a responsibility as both oppressors/colonizers, and sufferers, recognizing similar social issues in our communities. In my practice, I feel the need to discuss diversity with Swiss high school students, because European societies are multicultural while maintaining strong national roots, have a migration history and a colonial past, that lead them to follow discussions happening in the world with their specific perspective.

THEATRICAL POSITION

I will discuss my practice by merging a semiotic approach (Elam, 1977) with a phenomenological one (States, 1985; 1992; Grant, 2012), considering that both approaches are used to enhance reflexivity, i.e. to value the knowledge derived from the theatrical experience. Using

the concept “liminal” in Turner’s anthropological terms (Turner, 1982), the course is a process that fosters a liminal experience because it is outside the school curriculum and students participate on a voluntary basis. This enables them to challenge their comfort zone and cross a personal threshold defining their identity. It finally restores them to a community of equals with a public performance, at the end of the school year. My pedagogy focuses on phenomenology, in order to “claim [...] access to a fundamental-transcendental level of cognition, perception, intersubjectivity and being which would apply to all humans” (Grant, 2012, p. 10), encouraged to develop an ethical attitude that respects each participant’s complex history, experience, and point of view.

In the 1960s, Grotowski’s anthropological research “fundamentally redefined the relationship between the performer and his role” (Fischer-Lichte, 2008, p. 82), disregarding it as the ultimate goal of the actors. This leads us to the concept of performance, defined historically (Banes, 1990; Fischer-Lichte, 1997), anthropologically (Turner, 1987), semantically (Elam, 1980; Veltruský, 1981) and philosophically (Fischer-Lichte, 2008), that can be resumed as human "presence" on stage (Grant, 2012, p. 11). Moving from this theoretical background, I aim to foster the embodied experience of individuals employing artistic tools to express themselves (Carlson, 1985; Smith, 1991; Kozel, 1997; Jaeger, 2006). This experience invites the youth to develop self-awareness of their complex selves and of the multilayered communities and societies to which they belong.

In order to illustrate these matters, I will present the process of staging Simon's first act, along with students' perspectives. To elaborate this paper, I contacted nine out of the twenty-one participants more than one year after the performance, and asked the following questions: what did it mean to share a character with others? Were you able to reflect on the value of identity and the difference between United States and Swiss societies? In the following paragraphs I will discuss some quotes of the written answers I received from seven students, in order to evaluate the impact of this theatrical and pedagogical experience.

SOCIAL JUSTICE TOPICS IN THE PRACTICE

Neil Simon's *The Gingerbread Lady* (1970) presents a realistic and fun portrait of the US society of the late twentieth century. Set in the NYC apartment of Evelyn Meara, a woman recovering from alcoholism, the play covers different topics on diversity.

The main characters belong to the show business. For them, the need to appear is fundamental, and I focused on this topic to deepen the concept of soul and inner consciousness, which are invisible aspects to be represented on stage (Merleau-Ponty, 1968; 2002). Everyone was free to choose their favorite character, disregarding the gender assignments in the text. To make the invisible visible and expose the complexity of each character, performers had to choose one distinctive temper to engage with a specific quality of each character. They portrayed characters' different tempers, playing simultaneously on stage. For example, one student played the nervous, another one the brave or the selfish temperament of the same character.

- Evelyn Meara, Evy (42 years old), a singer and actress, was played simultaneously by five female performers.
- James Perry, Jimmy (40), Evelyn's friend and a gay actor, was played by one male and three females.
- Toby Landau (40), the wife of a producer living for her Helena Rubinstein make-up products, was played by three females.
- Lou Tanner (35), an unemployed music player, was played by one female and three males.
- Manuel (20), a Latino delivery boy, was played by two males.
- Polly Meara (17 years old), daughter of Evy and student—implicitly a direct representative of the participants, was played by three females.

I will identify participants' thoughts by declaring both the character they played and the performer's biological sex, female (F) or male (M).

Evy1(F) explicitly recognizes in the play the following topics:

> insecurity, homosexuality along with homophobia, summarized in gender identity, but also the hunger for success and defeat for failures, relationship troubles, differences between children and

> parents, toxic and harmful addictions, as well as psychiatric problems. (student response, 2020)

Xenophobia, racism, machismo, and sexism are also addressed in the play that is especially apt to generate one's identity awareness. About this issue, Evy2(F) considers: "In our society labels are put on all the time, as if each of us played a role assigned by [...] those who watch us. This is how we forget that we are the ones who create our identity and that we cannot depend on the opinions of others" (student response, 2020). In fact, the variety of characters and the multiple interpretations of the same character allowed the performers to experience the richness and depth of each personality.

THE PEDAGOGICAL PROCESS: CHARACTERS BETWEEN PRESENCE AND APPEARANCE

The multiplied roles are an intellectual challenge for performers, and Lou1(M) recognizes it: "a character most of the time is much more than what you read, and therefore pretending to share it with someone could sacrifice some fundamental aspects and make it appear simpler" (student response, 2020). He adds that "although a character is defined by elements that we all perceive, everyone has a different vision [...] about the personality of the shared character, and therefore there is the risk to show aspects that maybe for others do not apply" (student response, 2020). However, I assess participants' development of confidence and openness as a major facet of my research practice in arts education, supported by the male's own words valuing his experience. He manifests some contradiction to what he previously states about an apparent simplification: "But [...] I believe that it is still of fundamental importance to share a character with others in order to fully understand the vast array of emotions that characterize [... him], without therefore limiting oneself to one's own vision" (student response, 2020). Physical and emotional activities allowed to overcome intellectual barriers, and in regard to gender role, Lou2(F) states that for her it was interesting and fun to impersonate a male. She writes: "if you want to play a character that is so different from yourself, as in my case, the presence of other people is necessary to really understand it" (student response, 2020).

The strategies I used to stimulate interaction, dialogue, reflexivity and social change refer to the history of theater, facing “the decline of confidence in any possible authenticity of Character” (Fuchs, 1985, p. 172). In reference to the Great Reform of the early twentieth century represented in the theories of Mikhail Chekhov, Stanislavsky's disciple, I asked participants to select physical actions closely related to the temper of their character’s personality, in order to seek the comfort and meaningfulness of being on stage. They repeated small movements or gestures to enhance nonverbal and non-significantly encoded experiences (Jaeger, 2006) in resonance with the written text experienced with both physical and emotional contributions.

For performers, the “body is […] more than a vehicle of representation and mimesis, it manifests the presence of the actor, the immediacy of the event, and the material nature of the body” (Féral & Bermingham, 2002, p. 100). In a scene developing between mother and daughter, four young performers simultaneously playing Evy decided to physically stick to the fifth one interpreting "sweetness" in her weakest moment. She fears her daughter’s willingness to live with her, and they interpreted a meltdown when she finally truthfully declares her vulnerability and thus becomes more assertive in her relationship: “You’re seventeen years old, it’s time you judged me. I just don’t want you to get the idea that a hundred and eighty-three pounds of pure alcohol is something called Happy Fat [...] I’m not what you’d call an emotionally stable person” (Simon, 1971, p. 28). The kinesics becomes meaningful, as the movement of “melting” represents fragility, semantically. Evy1(F) writes:

> Perhaps because Evelyn has hit the lowest point, she has no problem saying what she thinks. On the contrary, it is more difficult for her to show what she really feels, just as it is difficult for her to let herself be loved by those who would like to help her, because the fear of falling back into the tunnel is too great, but even more so is the fear of dragging those around her into her mess and traumatizing them. (student response, 2020)

Performers' choice to interpret a distinctive temperament developed from activities based on Richard Schechner’s Rasa Boxes (1988). Young people explored the possibility of coloring the understanding and interpretation of a character in connection to eight human

essences outlined in a Sanskrit treatise on drama, the Nāṭya Śāstra, which are: surprise/wonder, love/eros, fear/shame, disgust/revolt, courage/heroism, laughter/hilariousness, sadness/compassion, and rage. They embodied and verbally played these inner states of being defined in a marked space, as they moved from one space and thus from one essence to another. The revelation of each inner state allowed character's complexity to clearly emerge when performers connected their chosen temper with others portraying different tempers of the same character. For example, the performers interpreting Evy realized how she is torn between sweetness and ferocity. When impersonating the two distinct personalities, they instinctively reacted on stage by turning their back on each other while still feeling how emotionally connected they were. These works of “positive, voluntary modes of refined self-presencing allow the practitioner to explore realms of embodiment which [...] allow one to (re)negotiate the terms and quality of engagement of the lived bodymind in its encounter with itself in the world” (Zarrilli, 2004, p. 661). A semiotic reading of this proxemic aspect defines how the meaningful use of space represents a conflict. Still, Evy3(F) declares (italics mine):

> The dismemberment of Evy's individuality into multiple persons made it more evident that *there is no single and precise concept of identity* [...], but that same Evy *was also just one* and the different people who played her also *felt this strong sense of shared identity*. (student response, 2020)

Participants acknowledged that the phenomenon of appearing is very complex: a person can be apparently sweet while controlling their anger. Phenomenologically speaking, such an experience asks participants to consider the crucial aspect of being in relation with any otherness, whether it be the reality of staging (i.e. in relation to other performers and theatrical conventions) or the request to represent visible and invisible aspects of the character, following its complexity and development in the plot. Evy2(F) writes: "I had the opportunity to play Evy, a woman constantly struggling with her inner insecurities and her seemingly secure outer image, which made me think a lot about the world we live in" (student response, 2020). And indeed, “by challenging the assumption that objects actually exist [...], we are more open to the present experience, thus creating the possibility of

attaining a «pure consciousness» of our immediate surroundings" (Wilcox, 2000, p. 78). Also Evy1(F) states: "Playing my character at the same time as other companions was fun, but it also made me think about how complex and multifaceted any one person is" (student response, 2020).

Trust and mutual support were developed in each group of participants. Polly(F) explains: "In the process leading up to the performance, it is essential to learn how to share the stage space with other people, as it is the harmony in the group work that is truly staged at the end of the year" (student response, 2020). Interpreters were collaborative and contextual in their "willing[ness] «to play the game» on which all aesthetic perception is based" (States 1996, p. 13) in theatre, and perception as a matter of "seeing" (Krasner & Saltz, 2006) is a complex experience for young performers engaged mentally, physically and emotionally throughout the liminal process of rehearsing for the show. Polly(F) finally considers the value of otherness for life itself: "Theater also represents unity for me, as each character needs the others to give meaning to his or her own existence" (student response, 2020).

In addition, I evaluate participants' personal development. In their interpretations, students recognized specific patterns of behavior in themselves, since "intentionality [that] can be described as both spatial and temporal is as a repetitive, habitual structuring of perceptual experience" (Jaeger, 2006, p. 136). Jimmy(F) explains: "We can learn to be independent of ourselves when we dislike ourselves or when we always run into the same dynamics we despise: what would Jimmy do instead of me?" (student response, 2020). Cognitive recognition of the aim of embodying personal choices in movements deepened the awareness of individual patterns in daily experience of all that surrounds, both by perceiving it and simultaneously interacting with it (Zarrilli, 2007). Lou1(M) declares:

> In my experience, it is not always easy to understand what you feel at the level of emotions in your life, but having the opportunity to impersonate someone other than myself and being able to analyze it helped me to define a little better what we call emotions, and even if they were not necessarily related to my life directly, they helped me to evaluate with a closer eye what happens in everyday life to me and the people around me, being

> able to understand me/them better. (student response, 2020)

Participants' awareness of the complexity of human reactions and internal challenges between temperaments follows from their multifaceted interpretation of the play, considering that "to understand the spatial temporality of intentionality […,] the constitution of an experience as a synthesis of the various bodily powers engage[s] in or connect[s] to features of the environment" (Jaeger, 2006, p. 135).

EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN SOCIETIES

The choice of Simon's play for a European staging is due to the richness of the US production in regard to self-representation and thus identity issues. Participants didn't perceive a great difference between the two societies, and still Evy1(F) considers (italics mine):

> a substantial difference that I notice between the two interconnected «communities» with different but similar habits and cultures is due and partly dictated by *past history, government institutions, education, social and insurance assistance, and political parties*. These aspects preferentially push in opposite directions to the differences that enrich us, that *should be normalized, accepted and shared, instead of being despised and called out to fuel hatred*. (student response, 2020)

She recognizes the presence of social justice issues, considering that on both continents resentments generated by differences are nurtured. Lou2(F) states:

> Being from North America myself, I think I was less surprised by the diversity of the characters in this American context. They were brutally honest individuals full of dark humor, completely aware of their own failures and those of the others. [...] These characters are also present in the European context but in a more hidden way. (student response, 2020)

Racial issues specific to the United States are addressed in the play. At the end of the first act, it is revealed that Lou's love for Evy ended

and drove her to alcoholism, because he had found a younger, Native American woman. The new romance is already over, and Evy asks: "What'd she do when you walked out on her? Ride into the sunset? Do a little sun dance? Wriggle and bounce her firm little body? You want to tell me about her tight little eighteen-year-old body, Lou?" (Simon, 1971, p. 39) This line reveals different, unjust attitudes towards society. Evy's racism surfaces and is apparently motivated by jealousy, while Lou's sexism and machismo come to the fore. Yet personalities are more complex, and participants learned that the apparent strength or weakness of any character has to deal with many more internal tensions, such as Evy attacking Lou while feeling her need for love.

Undoubtedly, the complexities in the characters' personalities are accurately portrayed in the play, and by embodying them, performers are helped in their reading between the lines. They grasp the invisible states which link complex human relationships, and question their inner selves. Neil Simon's play offers an opportunity to explore and acknowledge everyday, stereotypical attitudes towards diversity, and to question personal ways of experiencing and interpreting relationships and communities. Jimmy(F) writes:

> the play made me realize how there are very different people in the world, living opposite lives but feeling the same sensations, the same emotions, although for different dynamics. That's why theater is a good training for empathy and understanding of the other, who really is no other. (student response, 2020)

Interestingly, Evy1(F) comments on students' openness to identity discussion: "Among us young high school peers, I noticed a lot of open-mindedness on all the issues addressed through the characters" (student response, 2020), even when facing the fact, as Lou1(M) writes, that "everyone, no matter how hard they try to show themselves in a certain way, is actually hiding another, more intimate identity that they try to conceal out of shame or fear" (student response, 2020).

To promote the adolescent value of finding oneself in the confrontation with the other while respecting one's own diversity, Evy1(F) concludes by saying that "if the themes of the play were addressed more often, not just negatively, perhaps opening up and showing oneself for who one is would be easier and less exhausting" (student response, 2020). This is a powerful statement dealing with the

issue of societies neglecting opportunities to discuss and address human identity in its multilayered complexity. The other in its richness is indeed fundamental for a culture of acceptance of oneself and the other. On this call for broader open-mindedness, Evy2(F) adds:

> *The Gingerbread Lady* reminded me of how easy it is to focus on superficial aspects, how easy it is to judge and pass it off as a simple joke, something to laugh about... But above all, it forced me to focus my attention on the consequences of a life lived in the shadows, in denial, in a constant attempt to please the masses. (student response, 2020)

CONCLUSION

In the practice of educational theater, the analysis and staging of the first act of Neil Simon's *The Gingerbread Lady* allowed young people to both discover the plot and its themes through their own embodiment, and to open their mind towards awareness of each person's soul, emotions and physicality. By sharing the interpretation of a character with others, performers challenged their identity, raising ethical awareness on the complexity of individual and social experiences in a world where most of the time the "ego" would like to come first, and where the "ego" is often presented as a singular and well defined concept. Indeed, understanding the other follows from the possibility to deepen self-awareness and personal understanding. It is said that "empathy enlists possibilities rather than certainties" (Krasner, 2006, p. 256), accompanying young people to accept diversity and otherness.

To encourage high school students to achieve a state of individual consciousness, I engage with social justice, anti-xenophobia and anti-racist practices in the teaching of drama and theatre, asking for complex identities to take space and gain full respect. Questioning the richness of a personal identity allows students to overcome social blindness: students/performers gain awareness of social relationships and interactions, going far beyond the labels that categorize common identities, enacting experiences and therefore recognizing feelings and temperaments with which one should learn to deal in daily life. Participants, in their complex inner and physical identities, along with shared work, were challenged to acknowledge both the peculiar reality

of the theater and the complexity of true human relationships. They compared the social issues represented with those they experience every day, recognizing and valuing the concept of diversity on multiple levels.

Emotional comprehensiveness, along with intellectual understanding, is probably not enough on its own to deal with everyday social justice issues around the world, but I think it is a good starting point. As Jaeger writes:

> Perceptual openness or presence to what is new, different and other must in some way constitute an individual's ability to experience a world. Presence is the possibility of transformation in familiar, habituated, and socially entrenched patterns through which one experiences the world. (Jaeger, 2006, p. 139)

Curricula in the arts facilitate the teaching and learning of social justice because they challenge identities through the participation in a creative group or a community of individuals who face their mutual diversity, along with the diversity of the characters they are willing to portray. In doing so, stories and history are written into societies and become narratives according to different points of view. Arts education is a privileged way to become aware of these narratives and learn to respect them in our multicultural world.

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Reflections on Teaching Process Drama: A Critical Inquiry into Our Practice with/as Educators

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores our experiences as drama-in-education professors teaching educators how to create and facilitate process dramas (Bolton & Heathcote, 1995; Neelands & Goode, 2000; O'Neill, 1995) in their classrooms. A process drama involves multimodal embodied drama explorations covering a specific topic that the facilitator(s) would like the participants to explore. In this narrative of practice, we present an example of process drama that our university students created and facilitated that broached critical topics surrounding social justice for their students to explore. The university students ranged from teacher candidates in a Bachelor of Education program to those with many years of experience completing a Master of Education. In our experiences teaching drama-in-education courses, we have

encountered ethical dilemmas in the creation and facilitation of process dramas. Specifically, in the topics our students have selected and their positionalities as facilitators. In this article, through narrating our teaching experiences and what we learned from them, our goal is to call for artists and educators, like ourselves, to be more thoughtful in approaching the creation and facilitation of process dramas, especially when teaching people with different subjectivities and positionalities.

PROCESS DRAMA AS A GIFT?

> The paradox of the gift is that, because it can be seen simultaneously as both a present and a poison, it is sometimes worth remembering the unpalatable truth that a present, however well intentioned, may be thought to be poisonous by those who live in a different context and whose vision of a good life differs from our own. (Nicholson, 2005, pp. 161-162)

We open with Nicholson's reminder that experiences are received differently by each person. What we perceive as a beautiful skill and way of learning, such as process drama, others may experience as harmful and damaging. In this narrative of practice we reflect on our experiences as drama-in-education professors teaching educators to create and facilitate process dramas in their classrooms (Bolton & Heathcote, 1995; Bowell & Heap, 2013; Neelands & Goode, 2000; O'Neill, 1995). Having taught process drama to children, youth, and educators over the past 15 years, we explain our approach, while reflexively questioning our practice and those of educators we have worked with to critically examine ethical dilemmas we encountered using this strategy as white educators. We hope to contribute to ongoing conversations about race and theatre (Young, 2013), as we strive to develop more race-conscious practices in drama-in-education.

We write this narrative of practice from two different geographic locations; Amanda works and lives on the unceded territory of the K'ómoks First Nation and Sara on Treaty 4 territory, the traditional land of the Nêhiyawak, Anihšināpēk, Dakota, Lakota, and Nakoda peoples and the homeland of the Métis people. As white cisgender female educators, we seek to shine a critical lens on teacher education;

acknowledging that our practices build on pedagogies established by brilliant, yet predominantly white, figures in drama-in-education. With others (Jones, 2014; Reason & Jones, 2021; Streeter, 2020), we recognize the many contributions of scholars and teachers who are Black, Indigenous and People of Colour, whose work informs our teaching and our critiques (Deavere Smith, 2002; Luhning, 2010), yet whose valuable contributions are not always recognized in this field.

Over the past twelve years, we have acted as critical friends (Samaras, 2011), giving each other feedback as we investigate using process drama and role-play as a critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970) in the classroom. Drawing on our teaching experiences, our goal is to call for artists and educators, including ourselves, to be even more thoughtful in planning and facilitating process dramas, especially when teaching people with different subjectivities and positionalities. More specifically, we seek to unpack the ways that whiteness can manifest when drama-based methods are used to address critical issues that impact people differently and, to use Nicholson's (2005) metaphor, might poison the well of potential "gifts" out of which these dramas emerge.

PROCESS DRAMA: ENGAGING IN A RANGE OF DRAMATIC STRATEGIES

Process dramas are embodied, aesthetic, and multimodal explorations of specific topics through engagement in a range of dramatic strategies. They rely on facilitators and participants co-creating imaginary worlds, through improvisation, for the purpose of learning (Bowell & Heap, 2013; Dunn, 2016). In the case we present, our students created and facilitated a process drama that broached a social justice topic for their students and/or classmates to explore. Our students ranged in experience from teacher candidates in a Bachelor of Education program, to teachers with many years of experience completing a Master of Education.

Exploring the intersections of drama, culture, and power (e.g., Baldwin & Fleming, 2003; Conrad, 2004; Gallagher, Wessels, & Ntelioglou, 2012; Medina & Campano, 2006; O'Toole & O'Mara, 2007; Schneider, Crumpler, & Rogers, 2006; Winn, 2011), many studies advocate that process dramas have the potential to create transformative spaces where critical literacy exploration happens and

where students can work together to better understand cultural divisions. Our discussion in this paper is drawn from critical self-reflection on being white educators and multiple co- and individual teaching experiences we have had over the years, as well as our review of feedback we have given to our students during the creation and following the facilitation of their process dramas. Specifically, we wanted to explore how educators enrolled in university drama-in-education courses might use drama ethically, to inform their understandings of inequities (i.e. related to race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, etc.) and expand their pedagogical practices.

INQUIRY INTO OUR PRACTICE: WHO WE ARE AND ARE BECOMING

There is no "one moment" that we, the co-authors, realized the possible harm of our practice and our students' practices; rather there are several moments that bring us to this critical reflection. We met as doctoral students at a university on the west coast of Canada, where we spent hours discussing theories and problematizing drama-in-education and literacy methods. We are what collaborative self-study scholars name as "critical friends" (Goessling & Wager, 2020; Samaras, 2011), ones who nurture and support each other's ongoing research through a commitment to reflexivity in our work as drama educators, artists, and scholars. We share a passion for humanizing inquiry, a theoretical and methodological framework that fosters a consciousness-raising teaching and research approach guided by respect, care, reciprocity and humility with those we work/teach/research with (Freire, 1970; Paris & Winn, 2013).

Amanda has worked by, for and with many diverse communities using arts as education and advocacy. In the beginning of the 20th Century, Amanda's great-grandparents came to Turtle Island, known today as North America, from Poland/Russia—the borders were constantly shifting—fleeing the Jewish genocide of the Russian Red Army. They in turn became settler colonizers of other people's land. Her family history and experiences living in diverse geographic places, have made her adapt to new locations and languages quickly. Sara is of French and German heritage, a positioning that has afforded her unearned privilege and access to full citizenship rights on the land

currently known as Canada. Raised in a multiethnic, multiracial, and multifaith, yet historically Jewish, neighbourhood in Montreal, Sara was taught to confront her family's complex ties to the Holocaust at a young age. This led to a wariness of ethno-nationalism and a commitment to protecting the rights of minoritized peoples.

Throughout our careers, we have positioned our work with marginalized youth as "critical." Although critical pedagogy revolutionized understandings of education in the 1960s, it carries with it a number of limitations, such as the absence of an examination of patriarchal white privilege and a troubling meta-narrative of a binary liberation (oppressed vs. oppressor) (Ellsworth, 1989; Gore, 1992; Grady, 2003; Lather, 2001; Weiler, 2001). Reflecting on Ellsworth's (1989) statement that "everyone who has grown up in a racist culture has to work at unlearning racism" (p. 303), we have become aware of our complicity in the maintenance of whiteness in the educational system. We see our roles as antiracist pedagogues as a continuous, never-ending road of self-awareness and learning about our privileges and power to create learning and working environments that are spaces in which individuals may question themselves and each other, and become comfortable expressing their differences.

Our discussions about process drama began seven years ago while co-teaching a drama-in-education course. Later, as we went on to teach at different institutions, we continued to model a process drama for our students as facilitators–in–role to guide our university students through critical dramatic inquiries. When we teach process drama, we invite questions, note-taking, facilitate participatory multimodal activities (e.g., guided tours, map–making, town council meetings) and role-play alongside the participants. Students work in groups of three to six to create a process drama that they facilitate for their peers. We make suggestions and offer critiques throughout the planning process and following their facilitation.

As our teaching in new contexts with differently positioned students (i.e., age, race, context, location) has evolved, we continue to engage in critical discussion about teaching process drama, which has led to the following questions:

- What are the ethical limitations to process drama?
- How might process dramas position teachers, encouraging them to examine the ways in which culture, knowledge,

language, and power intersect within classroom settings?

This narrative of practice begins to answer these questions by presenting feedback that we gave to a group of predominantly white students who facilitated a process drama on residential schools. In 2017, we revisited this feedback when we were teaching from our respective new locations. As critical educators and friends, we turned to our teaching notes, examples of process drama planning sheets made by students, and the feedback we provided them, to uncover repeated patterns and concerns that arose from our practice.

CONTEXTUALIZING THE PROBLEM

Our pedagogical approach and understanding of ethics have been shaped by applied theatre and drama-in-education, feminist, and critical race scholars and practitioners who inspire us and who have shifted our focus toward culturally responsive and anti-racist education in order to meet the needs of racially minoritized students.

Drama-in-Education

Art is an aesthetic, affective means of knowledge production and a multimodal form of meaning-making with the potential to effect social change. Our work is informed by the work of theatre and drama pioneers, such as Augusto Boal (1979), Dorothy Heathcote (1995), and Cecily O'Neill (1995), among other drama-in-education, critical and multiple literacy scholars (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Gallagher, Wessels, & Ntelioglou, 2012; Medina & Campano, 2006; Nicholson, 2005; Rivière, 2008; Winn, 2011) who highlight advocacy, access, language, multimodality, and the experiences of minoritized people. Like these practitioners and scholars, we believe that drama-in-education may provide a viable framework through which education can engage young people in thinking about and taking action on social justice issues.

Feminist and Critical Race Critiques

We heed Ellsworth's (1989) critique that critical pedagogies are not always empowering for everyone when they are enacted in classrooms, as well as Lather's (2012) call to question the places

where our pedagogies "get stuck." One factor that undeniably shapes educators' worldviews and life experiences is their race. In our case, our positionality as white women shapes our teaching practice, and we are not alone. Education is a field dominated by women and, while statistics on race and employment are difficult to obtain in Canada, white educators are estimated to make up between 71-96% of teachers across this country (Ryan, Pollock, & Antonelli, 2009), and 85% of the teaching force in the United States (Howard, 2016). For decades, research has demonstrated that white educators are not always well-equipped to teach students from different racial backgrounds (Delpit, 2006; Dei, 1994; Evans-Williams & Hines, 2020; Howard, 2016) because Black, Indigenous, and other students of colour drop-out and are pushed-out of schools that fail to meet their needs in alarming numbers (Codjoe, 2001; Fine, 1991; Morris, 2016). Growing out of the multicultural education movement of the 1970s and 80s, calls for culturally relevant, affirming, and sustaining pedagogies (Ladson-Billings, 2014), as well as anti-racist (Dei, 2006), decolonizing (Battiste, 2013), and abolitionist education (Love, 2019) have grown louder. Our research and work in and out of schools affirms that significant changes to curriculum, including in drama-in-education, are needed to meet the needs of all students.

Teacher Education

We are concerned by the ways in which whiteness is reinforced in education and in teacher education programs (Schroeter, 2019; Souto-Manning & Emdin, 2020) and how a dominant lens is applied to curriculum and educational scholarship. When creating our syllabi, we seek to include diverse voices from drama-in-education and have often found this task challenging, turning to theatre and performance studies and other areas of education to fulfill this requirement. There are white drama educators who work with and highlight the voices of minoritized groups, such as Heathcote's (1971) work with working class children in *Three Looms Waiting*, yet few widely recognized "pioneers" of drama education are minoritized. Therefore, while drama may have the potential to disrupt conventional thinking and examine diverse perspectives, we wonder whether, *in practice*, this is always done in ways that are affirming for minoritized students.

Gallagher and Rodricks (2017) illustrate the challenges drama teachers experience in trying to avoid stereotyping, a shallow

representation of an individual or a group that is fixed and oversimplified, when they bring real world examples into the classroom to explore dramatically. In their study, they illustrate how a Black drama teacher was able to problematize their source material because they could relate to their racially minoritized students. However, we wonder how much white teachers would share this instinct. As noted above, white teachers are overrepresented in education and teacher education programs (Souto-Manning & Emdin, 2020) in Canada and the United States. Souto-Manning and Emdin note that although teacher education programs have begun to integrate multicultural materials, they often do so in ways that uphold Eurocentric values. We take this point seriously, for, we have come to note this pattern when our students, with "good intentions," select critical issues to examine through process drama.

LEARNING THROUGH EXPERIENCE: 2014 CO-TEACHING PROCESS DRAMA

In 2014, we co-taught a Drama-in-Education course for 35 predominantly white graduate and undergraduate students. It was then that we first witnessed a group create a process drama that we considered unethical in that we believed it could cause more harm than good for participants. In this particular process drama, the group of four students created a simulation of a residential school experience from a white settler-colonial perspective, rather than creating an imagined metaphorical world, as they had been instructed to do. Debriefing this process drama, with the class and each other, we asked 'what are the ethical limitations of creating a process drama?' This led to deep discussion with the students, which included in-depth written feedback about why we felt the process drama crossed ethical boundaries. In our feedback to the group, Sara began by commending them for their decision to explore residential schools with Grade 5 and 6 students especially since, at the time, few educators seemed willing to do so and truth-telling about residential schools is a necessary part of reconciliation. The second part of the written feedback was specific to ideas about how to shift the power dynamics in an imagined world:

> Instead of having the students in role as students in a simulated

> residential school, you could tell them that they are school designers/engineers/district representatives who are going to be evaluating a school that existed not long ago, and that their job is to determine whether it was a good school or whether it should have been shut down. Then the students get to decide what should or should not have happened to the school using their own ethics and value judgements. These alterations shift the power in the process drama in a significant way that would make it more open for the students to explore their own feelings about something they know little or nothing about and further develop their own sense of ethics. This approach also protects them from being made to feel excluded, anxious or ashamed by the process drama. The trick with this powerful medium is not to use it in order to create mini social experiments à la Stanford Prison Experiment, but to open up spaces in the curriculum to explore issues through creative and dramatic engagement.

The reactions from the group were varied. Some students reacted in a way consistent with the features of white fragility (DiAngelo, 2018), expressing shame, hostility, and defensiveness, and believed that we had accused them of being racist. As their instructors, it was our responsibility to let our students know their process drama had crossed an ethical boundary. We had intervened during the planning and rehearsal process, attempting to shift the direction that the group was heading with their non-metaphorical scenario, but the students ultimately chose to ignore our concerns. Their process drama was too realistic and, therefore, potentially damaging. Some students in the class agreed. Moreover, this process drama was created with only white settler students in mind, not with a concern for Indigenous and other racialized students, or teaching from a perspective that was mindful of historical trauma. In the following sections, we discuss further implications for this particular process drama and how we have altered our teaching of process dramas since.

CRITICAL INQUIRY: WHAT COULD HAVE HAPPENDED DIFFERENTLY

It's important to firstly note that at the time of this process drama, there was less focus on Indigenous ways of knowing in education that are

now being integrated into some provinces' curriculum (Campbell, 2004). Although this reflects progress in moving towards more diverse ways of learning that include culturally relevant, affirming, and sustaining pedagogies (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Paris, 2012), as well as anti-racist (Dei, 2006), decolonizing (Battiste, 2013), and abolitionist education (Love, 2019), it also comes with many challenges. Firstly, all schools do not follow this mandate and when they do it often looks more like cultural appropriation, the adoption of one culture's traditions into the dominant culture, than a pedagogical tool. When there are attempts to interweave Indigenous knowledge into the curriculum, Elders and Knowledge Keepers are sought out, or should be, to affirm that the protocols are being respected and taught in a sound manner. This puts overwhelming pressure on the few Elders and Knowledge Keepers who can be funded, albeit very little funding, to share and collaborate with urban public school districts. Often times teachers, the majority white, are left with nobody to get feedback from and may misrepresent the knowledges.

Next, we reflect on how this process drama engaged in the imaginary world, a key principle of this approach, and then follow with specific changes that we discussed with the group to change the power dynamics. The group had their process drama participants begin in an imaginary world where the facilitators were teachers and the participants were students at a school. They asked the students to recollect and share their experiences about their first day of school and many reflected positive memories. However, there are and will be many cases when the first day of school have been terrible or traumatic for students for various reasons. We suggested that it might be more productive to start by asking what participants liked most about recess or summer vacation. This shift could more readily lead the students to think about ideas related to freedom, play, home, and happiness, providing a strong contrast to what occurred in residential schools. The group facilitators showed considerable expertise in leading drama activities within their process drama, such as image work (Boal, 2002) to reflect on their positive feelings of the first day of school, many of which showed children playing.

A potentially triggering experience for the participants was when they were later asked to act in-role as residential school students. This took away any sense of power from the participants, breaking with established traditions in process drama to have participants act in a

position of power (Heathcote & Bolton, 1995) and put them in a place where they could be harmed. The scenario suggested in the feedback above sought to rebalance the power dynamic. Since the purpose of the process drama was to teach Grade 5 and 6 students about residential schools, the participants could learn about the facts of these schools through role-playing as school designers, engineers, or district representatives tasked with evaluating residential schools of the past. A variety of residential school media (photographs, stories, film, etc.) chosen by the facilitators could be shared with the "expert school designers," who would evaluate the residential schools based on contemporary materials about learning and school design. As expert school designers, participants would be in a position of power and recall positive playful environments that they shared initially in their first tableau.

There could be a moment where, after learning more about the residential schools, the participants could still create a tableau reflecting how they imagined that children in residential schools may have felt being taken away from their parents, unable to speak their language, and forced to be separated from their brothers and sisters. In this instance tableau would be used to explore emotional connections for one moment, rather than subjecting participants to abusive behaviours while in role. This "one moment" tableau would also serve as an interesting contrast from the first tableau, and lead to a discussion that might capture how feelings associated with freedom and play might have been lost through the imposition of the residential school system.

Another alternative we proposed was the use of a children's book, like Shi-shi-etko (Campbell, 2005) and exploring residential schools through story drama (Booth, 2005; Miller & Saxton, 2016). Here a book is used as a starting point, while interrupting the reading to enable participants to play in-role as characters in the book (i.e. hot seating), or other characters students may imagine. Story drama creates imaginative points of dialogue for young students, which is essential to language learning, literacies, play and critical inquiry (Berriz et al., 2018). An added benefit of doing story drama with Shi-shi-etko is that Campbell is a Nłeʔkepmx, Syilx, and Métis author, thus enabling the educators to honor authentic stories, lived experiences, and the knowledge of Indigenous people. Drama-in-education provides multiple entry points demanding complex problem-solving skills, but it also

provides tangible scaffolding for literacy work and critical thinking. Materials and strategies must be carefully selected to address different issues with care.

LOOKING FORWARD TO FUTURE ETHICAL PROCESS DRAMAS AND ROLE-PLAYS

As critical friends, we have spent many hours discussing what we could have done differently as drama educators to better explain the principles and facilitation of process dramas. In 2017, we had phone conversations about our experiences teaching process drama independently since 2014. One key issue we observed was that students sometimes chose a critical issue to illuminate through a process drama without using a sufficiently strong metaphor to create distance between students and the issue. We felt that this was one place where ethical challenges became most evident. In all of our times teaching process drama, we have explained the importance of imagined/metaphorical ideas to students, but we find that students new to drama often resist this aspect, preferring to use real world examples. Sometimes this impulse is guided by their desires to be “good” critical educators who address real problems with their students. We understand this persuasion, which is why we examine the ethical conundrums in our own practice with process drama.

As well, given that many Canadians live in denial about the events that occurred in residential schools as exemplified by reactions of shock and surprise at the recent unveiling of evidence showing the existence of over a thousand unmarked graves (MacDonald, 2021), we now feel that residential schools should be learned about from Indigenous perspectives/voices, with an emphasis on truth-telling rather than metaphor. Therefore, our current position is that non-Indigenous educators should not teach about residential schools through the use of process drama or any metaphor that moves away from truth-telling. This reflection leads us to the conclusion that there may be other topics that are not best explored through process drama, led by educators in dominant positions or who are outsiders to the communities that have been harmed (e.g., slavery, the Holocaust, etc.). In those instances, we believe that the use of other carefully planned drama strategies is preferable.

A Peek into Sara's Courses

Currently in Sara's university classrooms, students continue to want to address residential schools through process drama, as this is part of the curriculum. Through increased engagement with Indigenous colleagues, local Elders, kokums, and Knowledge Keepers, Sara has learned the edict "no stories about us, without us." That is, no stories about Indigenous peoples without their full and voluntary participation, as stories about colonization have been (mis)told by settlers for too long. Teaching from this frame, Sara directs her students to think about the perspective from which they would have to explore residential schools in order to connect authentically to the source material and avoid telling someone else's stories. She also asks her students to reflect on who they would have been in that particular historical context. For students who are white settlers, this has meant realizing that they may have been teachers in residential schools. These discussions have led students to make connections between education and its role in enduring colonization. It is telling that students move away from the topic when they realize which perspective they would need to examine it from. The desire to protect one's own feelings and emotions is strong, which is how the potential for doing harm with affective art becomes apparent. Part of Sara's practice is also to problematize process dramas she has created and facilitated, highlighting some of the pitfalls she has encountered in this work, in spite of their affective power and positive educational outcomes.

A Peek into Amanda's Courses

In Amanda's courses, she first models a process drama based on a metaphorical idea and has students create their process dramas using an adaptation of Heathcote's Mantle of the Experts Task Sheet that she obtained during a workshop with Dorothy Heathcote at the University of Victoria in 2009. She has found that by using this task sheet, she is able to further guide her students to think about how to represent their process drama through a metaphorical imaginary world. Heathcote's task sheet includes the following questions to guide the creation process:

- Task: What "strategy" are you using in order to create a fictional/imaginary world for your participants? (e.g., prereading

articles, tableaux work, newspaper reporters interviewing people, etc.)

- Demands: What do the participants need to do during this task in order to be a part of the fictional/imaginary world? What role are you having them play?
- Purpose: What perspective are you trying to have your participants understand through role play? What are your goals as the facilitator in having your participants do this task?
- Preparations: What do the participants need access to in order to be successful in this task? What props might you need? What costumes? What materials (e.g., if you are making a map you would need poster paper and markers)?
- Devices: What devices (i.e., drama strategy such as tableaux) do the participant(s) use in order to gain further understanding of the issue/topic? Why does this particular device help them gain a different perspective?
- Outcomes: (answer after process drama is finished) What happened during this task?

Amanda also suggests that students use story drama, where a children's book or young adult novel may become the starting point or pre-text for their process dramas, as many books stem from metaphorical teachings. After modeling a process drama and giving her students the task sheet as a creative guide, she has found that some student groups still create process dramas that can push the ethical boundaries of drama because they position the participants as victims, in potentially traumatizing circumstances, especially for students who have been marginalized. This was especially true for those groups of student teachers who were creating process dramas for middle or high school students that based their process dramas off of fictional young adult novels.

For instance, one group of middle school teachers created a process drama stemming from the book *The Giver* (Lowry, 1993), in which they created a dystopian world where they wanted participants to understand government control. As facilitators they initially wanted to always be in control of their fictional world to control participants. Amanda discussed in depth with the group about the potential harm in retraumatizing students. Through these discussions this multiracial and multicultural group of students quickly recognized the potential harm

their process drama could cause. Returning to this idea of giving all the students/participants positions of power by positioning them as 'experts' in their particular role, they rewrote their task sheet so that all participants at one point were in a position of power via their chosen ages, jobs, and by visualizing their characters dreams. This changed the dynamics of the process drama, as well as geared it away from their realistic examples where the facilitators controlled everything and participants were victims of their control.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE OF DRAMA-IN-EDUCATION

We continue to explore the ethical limitations of process drama and our own practice in our writing (Schroeter & Wager, 2017), and ponder how to support student teachers in developing ethical practices, while addressing real world issues. Process dramas can lay the groundwork for gaining multiple perspectives, offering an embodied critical space as a springboard for discussion, raising awareness about current issues, and helping learners gain understanding of their own socio–cultural identities. They can also, if created and facilitated unethically, as with the process drama about residential schools, lead participants into turbulent waters that can be damaging. We argue that when teaching process drama, ethical limitations need to be thoroughly discussed and that insisting on the use of metaphor is useful for avoiding harmful practice. As well, even with the use of metaphor, drama works with emotions, on an affective level, and there is always the possibility that a participant will be deeply impacted by the experience. We look towards art to move us, so we wonder how to create a place where participants feel that they can express the impact that a process drama has on them, and not walk away hurt. One solution in addition to a long debrief between facilitators and participants is to have a support system available, such as informing a guidance counsellor, drama therapist, or Elder about the work ahead of time, and having them available to participants during and/or afterward.

We hope that writing and publications in drama-in-education will begin to better reflect the diverse voices and perspectives of practitioners who already make up a large part of the field. We are aware of the inherent limitations of our lenses, as white educators, even as we strive to make our classrooms safer for minoritized students. We agree with other critical drama educators who promote

the use of process drama in the K-12 classroom and in pre-service education courses (Jones, 2014; Reason & Jones, 2021; Streeter, 2020), especially in utilizing process dramas to further dig into critical issues. We advise other educators to continuously check and question their positions, those of the students/participants, and their roles they have them play in process drama. This can happen through exploring the imaginary world of the process dramas and assuring that all participants experience multiple perspectives, especially those of power, within the process dramas through an imagined/metaphorical world. Nevertheless, even metaphor has its pitfalls. Luckett (2017) reminds us that we must be mindful about who we cast in particular fictional roles because certain characters and animals have particular histories with different racialized groups.

Returning to Nicholson (2005), cited at the beginning of this essay, process drama is meant for us to experience "a different context" or contexts, and art has the potential to "make experiences visible, felt, and shared—even across different positionalities" (Fox, 2020, p. 99). However, we argue that we must unpack power structures *in* drama classrooms with learners and be thoughtful and patient as we work to create meaningful and ethical spaces in the curriculum through process drama.

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Active Theatre History

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ABSTRACT

The study of Theatre History, overwhelmingly considered beneficial to high school theatre students, has a greater success of engaging them if it involves active and creative learning. That's the theory; this article describes one praxis that supports the theory. It is a learning activity that incorporates higher order thinking skills to synthesize knowledge into the creation of something new. This project requires students to research genres or eras of theatre history and function as playwrights who write a scene that reflects the characters, conflicts, and conventions of a given period. Enhancing the goal of moving from theory into practice, this article provides a detailed description of the praxis and includes accompanying resources.

Every student I have ever had in a Theatre Methods course believes that a high school theatre course must include Theatre History. The

challenge for these future teachers always is—How do you make a Theatre History unit as active and engaging as your other units? This is not a new theatre teaching issue. In 1993, teacher and author Nancy Bishop faced the same situation. “The challenge facing you, the teacher,” she wrote in her “Teaching Theatre History” article, “is to get students interested and engaged in theatre history. High school students are not interested in listening to lectures or in memorizing timelines, dates, and facts. Most teenagers want to act and be active. That’s what sets drama classes apart from the rest of the academic day” (p. 3).

Stefani Ethridge Woodson, in her 2004 article “Creating an Educational Theatre Program for the Twenty-First Century,” echoes Bishop’s belief in active learning, calling for instruction and a “… program that treats young people as active agents rather than passive observers… [who are] capable of producing art by allowing them to practice the artistic identities of playwright, producer, performer, director, and designer” (p. 27). Seven years later, Shawnda Moss added her voice to those endorsing the value of the study of the past and its plays and practices. “There is much to be gained from exploring theatre history in your classroom, but only if it is done in a way that prompts students to consider the contexts that drive artistic expressions” (p. 11). “…[A]side from teaching the facts and terms of theatre history,” Moss continues, “teachers should also use higher order thinking in instruction, assignments, and assessments” (p. 12).

My graduate students would agree wholeheartedly with the theory promoted by these authors, but our discussions would always circle back to “How?” How can we design theatre history lessons that are “active, multi-dimensional, and rigorous” (Moss, p. 12)? Because the word “praxis” means the practical application of a theory—practice, as distinguished from theory—this journal seems like a good place to share one innovative way to make Theatre History a dynamic experience in which students are active creators. More than just a brief paragraph describing this assignment, what follows is a detailed description of an active learning project accompanied by resources to aid and accelerate implementation and assessment.

This assignment was one that I gave to my high school students regularly. Like many teachers who create successful learning experiences, I kept thinking, “I should write an article about this. I should share this idea with other teachers.” Then the years went by,

leaving me with a collection of good scenes, good memories, and good intentions. I shared my plans and notes with my graduate students who helped me clarify the instructions and strengthen the rubric. All of that written material, however, does not spontaneously translate into a useful article. Finding myself with extra hours this past year, I finally focused on my goal of organizing my experiences into a coherent description of the project that I hope will be useful to other educators.

Active and Authentic

This assignment requires students to research and apply their findings in a project that meets particular criteria, but also requires imagination and ingenuity. It reflects the principles of authentic assessment—creating a product that is or is close to what professionals in the field create. “Authentic assessment is designed to promote the use of higher order cognitive skills related to using, modifying, or rebuilding knowledge into something new” (Villarroel et al, p. 848). In this case, students will work as playwrights commissioned to write a short original script.

THE ASSIGNMENT BASICS

All students receive the same scenario:

- Character 1 searches for a misplaced object.
- Character 2 arrives and helps Character 1 search.
- In their search, they discover a letter or document or item that somehow incriminates Character 3.
- Character 3 enters, discovers them examining the letter, document, or item, and confronts them.

The task is to work as playwrights, devise a scene that follows this scenario, and then write it so that it reflects the style of a particular Theatre History era or genre, for example—a Greek Tragedy or Restoration Comedy or American Musical Theatre.

Research Before Writing

Students will research their given period of Theatre History or genre to learn its characteristics. This research is easy to do via the Internet,

beginning with a search for "Characteristics of _____ Theatre." "Crash Course Theatre," the PBS series on YouTube, can also provide a sufficient number of facts to inform the main assignment goal of writing an original scene.

Students should also read examples of plays from their given era. Accessing copies of brief scenes from plays should provide enough information for the assignment. An astonishing number of plays and scenes are located easily via an Internet search. The character names should be creatively indicative of the given time period. (Some of my students' examples: a Greek tragic character named Caltigone or a Restoration Comic characters named Sir Walter Widget and Lady Snobwell) The stage directions and dialogue should likewise take their inspiration from the language used in the scripts by the playwrights of the era. A Shakespearean scene will use "thee," thou," "thy," and "thine." A Chekhov scene will include detailed stage directions to set the scene, the time of day, the weather, and the characters' clothing. A Greek tragedy will require a Chorus in addition to the three characters and an American musical will require, of course, at least one song to move the plot along.

The letter, document, or item could be a tablet, scroll, birth certificate, message in a bottle, or some type of treasure. My students have used photographs, paintings, diaries, and love letters. The choice is up to the student playwright(s) and should be driven by the time period of the piece.

Students will also use the information they find in their research to write an introduction to their scene. This introduction will provide a little background information, introduce their scene's setting and characters, and be written in a style that would suit a narrator. Some of my students recognized that this aspect of the work mirrored what they would include in a paper, but the performative intention of this writing was much more motivating to them.

In Person or Online

This assignment works for in person or online instruction. In person, students can collaborate on the research and the script, rehearse, and then present it. Online, students can work alone or collaborate on the research and the script. Melissa Bean, one of my graduate students and a full-time high school theatre teacher, found this to be true:

> Collaborative script writing ended up being a fantastic strategy to use in the remote classroom setting. Rather than simply lecture to students, I was able to use collaborative script writing in small groups to allow students to explore the content themselves and discern what should be included in a script presentation to the class. Engaging students is a challenge in remote learning and collaborative script writing enabled them to take a more active role in the content and promoted increased classroom engagement as they had the opportunity to work collaboratively with their peers. (personal communication with author, 2020)

Instead of presenting the script as a scene, students can record it as a radio play with three actors reading the roles or with one actor reading all three roles in different voices. Most cell phones have recording apps and the resulting files can be uploaded to Google Drive and accessed with ease. A script written by an individual could also be shared onscreen in an online session and read aloud with volunteers voicing the characters.

ASSIGNMENT MATERIALS

What follows are a set of documents to use or adapt for students. There is a *Theatre History or Genre Research* sheet to guide the collection of information, the *Theatre History Scenario Assignment* and instructions, an *Assessment Checklist*, and a *Script Writing Format* page containing instructions and examples.

Sample Scripts

Below are two portions of scripts that high school students in my advanced acting course wrote for this assignment. My students, like those of Jason Whitney (2006), enjoyed "…using the skills used by professional dramatists: developing fictional characters, setting the scene, generating dialogue, creating conflict, and developing a theme" (p. 55). Teachers may choose to share the script portions with students or simply examine them to strengthen the understanding of the potential of this assignment.

Restoration Comedy Scene Section

DIZABEL

Alack-a-day! How could I have lost Dandim's ring? Betrothed only yesterday and already I have proven myself a careless and ungrateful maid. Surely if Dandim were to discover my misdeed, he would cancel our engagement! *(She searches the room.)*

DANDIM

(*Offstage)* Dizabel, my love, are you within?

DIZABEL

(*Underneath the desk*) O me! Dandim cannot see my naked left hand!

DANDIM

(*Bursting in*) Ah ha!

DIZABEL

Ah!

DANDIM

I saw you hiding, you little minx. Are you playing games with me?

DIZABEL

No! Ha-ha! Here I am!

DANDIM

Darling, come. My love. My heart. My soul. My ring!? Dizabel, my pet, where is my ring? Have you changed your mind? Farewell!

DIZABEL

Dandim! Wait!

DANDIM

No! Good-bye forever.

DIZABEL

No! Pray… (*Desperately*) But you're spoiling the game!

DANDIM

(*Instantly*) What's that? Game you say?

DIZABEL

Why yes! I've hidden the ring. It's somewhere in this room. And when you find it… you shall get a prize!

DANDIM

A prize! Well, I say, Dizabel! You are a clever damsel! Let the game begin! (*He begins to search)* Ha! What's this?

DIZABEL

You've found it then?

DANDIM

Found it, yes! Proof that Boyd Backstab, my dearest friend in all the world, is nothing but a… (*Searching for the word)* Oh, you know. What's the word? A person who hurts you when you're not looking.

DIZABEL

Backstabber?

DANDIM

That's it! (*Reads the letter aloud)* "Dearest Dizabel Manypenny, thou art the goodliest lady that ever mine eyes beheld. Though my heart continues to beat, I only live for the day when you shall be mine." The rogue!

DIZABEL

Pish, I'd quite forgotten about that! Dandim, you musn't pay it any mind. I thought it best to forget the letter entirely…
(*Enter Boyd)*

BOYD

Unfortunately, forgetting it would be the worst thing you could do.

* * *

"Post War American" Theatre Scene Section

MARY ANN

Where does Mother keep that passport? What time is it?

DOUGLAS

Just after 4. When was her appointment?

MARY ANN

3:00. She'll be back any minute and I really don't know when we're going to get another chance to look. (*She opens and slams desk drawers.*).

DOUGLAS

Relax, Mare. We are going to find it. Stop slamming drawers. Here. Look through this pile of papers.

(*Both flip through some pages for a few seconds.*)

Huh. This looks like your birth certificate…except that it says "Margaret" not "Mary." Yes. "Margaret Ann Foster. Born on the 21st day of June, 1935." You never—

MARY ANN

What? Let me see that. *(She pulls the document away from him.*)

DOUGLAS

You never told me that you changed your name, or had a—

MARY ANN

This isn't mine. Who the hell is Margaret Ann?!

DOUGLAS

(Hesitating) Twin? Your twin? See, look, here's yours.

MARY ANN

(*She reads and compares the birth certificates*) "Mary Ann Foster born on the 21st day of June, 1935…born to Meredith C. Foster…at 12:04 A.M." (*Compares it to the other*) "born to Meredith C. Foster at…12:26

A.M.” (*She tries to process what she sees.)* I had a sister… a *twin*?!

MRS. FOSTER
(*Offstage*) Mary Ann? Doug? What’s all that racket?!

* * *

National Core Theatre Standards addressed by this assignment:

Theatre/Creating
TH:Cr2.1 Process Component: *Develop*
Anchor Standard: *Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.*
Enduring Understanding: *Theatre artists work to discover different ways of communicating meaning.*
Essential Question: *How, when, and why do theatre artists' choices change?*

Grade: High School
Performance Level: Proficient
TH:Cr2.1.HSI
a. Explore the function of history and culture in the development of a dramatic concept through a critical analysis of original ideas in a drama/theatre work.

Grade: High School
Performance Level: Accomplished
TH:Cr2.1.HSII
a. Refine a dramatic concept to demonstrate a critical understanding of historical and cultural influences of original ideas applied to a drama/theatre work.
b. Cooperate as a creative team to make interpretive choices for a drama/theatre work.

Grade: High School
Performance Level: Advanced
TH:Cr2.1.HSIII
a. Develop and synthesize original ideas in a drama/theatre work utilizing critical analysis, historical and cultural context, research, and western or non-western theatre traditions.
b. Collaborate as a creative team to discover artistic solutions and make interpretive choices in a devised or scripted drama/theatre work.

Theatre History or Genre Research

Researcher(s) Names: _____

Theatre History Era or Genre: _____

Approximate years of this era or genre: _____

A brief list of some plays and playwrights of the era or genre:

Plays	**Playwrights**
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

A brief list of some of the character names found in plays of the era or genre:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

A brief list of some of the theatre conventions (customs or practices) of the era or genre:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

A brief list of some lines of dialogue from a play or two of the era or genre:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Theatre History Scene Assignment

Eras or Genres of Theatre History

Greek Tragedy or Comedy
Roman Theatre
Medieval—Mystery, Morality, Miracle plays
Italian Renaissance
Commedia Dell Arte
French Neoclassical Comedy
Restoration Comedy
18th Century Sentimentalism
Ballad Opera
Elizabethan/Shakespearean
Jacobean
Melodrama
Asian Theatre (Noh, Kabuki, Bunraku)
Indian Sanskrit Drama
Beijing Opera
Realism (Ibsen, Chekhov)
Naturalism, Expressionism (Strindberg)
Surrealism, Epic Theatre (Brecht)
20th Century Symbolism and Expressionism
Postwar American (Williams, O'Neill, Miller, Wilson, Hansberry)
Burlesque-Vaudeville
American Musical Theatre
Theatre of the Absurd

Tasks

1. Write a scene in the style of one of the eras or genres listed above using the following scenario and correct script writing format:

- Character 1 searches for a misplaced object.
- Character 2 arrives and helps Character 1 search.
- In their search, they discover a letter, document, or item that somehow incriminates Character 3.
- Character 3 enters, discovers them examining the letter, document, or item and confronts them.

2. Write a 5—10 sentence introduction to your script that identifies:

- its era or genre
- some of the theatre conventions employed in the plays of this era or genre
- some of the plays and playwrights of this era or genre
- the setting for your scene
- your characters and a short description of each

(Note: This introduction should be written so that a Narrator could read it before the start of a performance of your scene.)

The criteria for this assignment appears on the next page.

Theatre History or Genre Scene Scoring Sheet

Theatre History Time Period or Genre of Scene: _____

Playwright(s): _____

	Definitely 9	**Mostly 7**	**Partially 5**	**Minimally 3**	**None 0**
The scene follows the given scenario.					
The scene reflects theatre conventions of plays of the given time period or genre.					
The language of the scene is typical of the given time period or genre.					
The character names reflect those used in the plays of the given time period or genre.					
The scene is written/typed in correct script writing format.					
The script length is between 2 and 5 typewritten pages.					
The script shows evidence of careful proofreading for correct/appropriate spelling, punctuation, use of italics, and typos.					
The introduction identifies the scene's era or genre some of its theatre conventions.					
The introduction identifies some of the plays and playwrights of the scene's era or genre.					
The introduction identifies the scene's setting and characters with a short description of each.					
The script was submitted on time.					

88-99 Standing Ovation
77-87 Round of Applause
66-76 Polite Clapping
0-65 Back to Rehearsal

Total Points _____

Script Writing Format

TITLE
(Centered and in ALL CAPS)
By Playwright(s)

Character List (Character names in ALL CAPS followed by a brief description)

QUEEN AUDRASTOS, Ruler of the kingdom during her husband's illness
TIMOSTHENES, her son and heir to the throne
JAESOP, their long-time servant

Setting (A brief description is fine, but you may include important details)

An office in a suburban home

or

A disheveled office full of books, piles of papers, and ratty furniture in a mid-20th century suburban home

Dialogue (Center the CHARACTER NAME—ALL CAPS—and begin the dialogue left-justified on the following line.)

MAGNOLIA
Petunia, please, please stay! Help me find my ring! I need your keen eyes. Please!

PETUNIA
I'll stay, if you promise not to utter another word about dear Vinca neglecting you.

Stage Directions (*Italicize* the text and put it in parentheses.)

(The lights come up. James enters from the bathroom after his morning shower. He is dressed in a buttoned-down shirt, boxers, and dress socks. He sings and dances as he pulls on his trousers and finishes grooming himself.)

JAMES
(Sings)

Love is in the air! Love is here—right here!
I'll slap on some cologne. Where is my cell phone?
I'll put an end to days and nights of being all alone!

CONCLUSION

The contents of this article are just one response to the question of how to make the study of Theatre History active, engaging, and authentic for young people. Let them be researchers for a reason. Let them be playwrights within parameters. Let them apply what they learn in a creative context, producing new work to share in ways that theatre artists have always shared—in scripts and on stage. And, of course, let them use the theatre history scripts produced to perform the original scenes and further expand active learning goals.

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Web sites:
ArtsEducationOnline.org
DramaticApproachesToTeaching.com

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Creating a Graphic Transposition of Ibsen's *A Doll's House*: An Interdisciplinary and Experimental Collaboration between a Performer and an Illustrator

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ABSTRACT

This article reflects the unique and innovative methodological approach taken in the development of PROYECTO NORA. *This interdisciplinary and collaborative research project aimed to work through and into the intersections between illustration and theatre, with the aim of creating an illustrated book of the play* A Doll's House *by Henrik Ibsen as an outcome of this process. Through the graphic transposition of Ibsen's work our intention was to create a parallel story to the dramatic written text, enabling new viewpoints and perspectives. To achieve this, Carolina Schütte González and I explored the story through the use of the actress's body to create the main female character, Nora. Through embodying Nora's thoughts and feelings, we sought to expand upon and deepen our understanding of the character and the wider story. We documented, filmed and photographed the process of creating our own Spanish version of Ibsen's text, and our innovative and emergent*

rehearsal process in which we created Nora's movements, postures and gestures in hopes of uncovering and expressing thoughts, feelings and emotions that are unseen and unspoken throughout the text. During this five-week long process in Santiago, Chile, and against a backdrop of widespread protests and riots in the country, we created a unique collaborative methodology that travelled towards art through theatre resulting in the creation of a graphic transposition of Ibsen's work.

INTRODUCTION

Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* was first published and performed more than a hundred years ago, at the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen on December 21st 1879 (Meyer, 1974, p. 477). It is a play considered by many to be a "global success" (Holledge et al., 2016, p. 1). It has been translated into thirty five languages and staged in eighty seven countries (Holledge et al., 2016, p. 1). It has enduring resonance and provides important space to reflect on gender roles through story. The play "owes its worldwide reputation to the last scene, where Nora [chooses to leave] her husband and children" (Janss, 2017, p. 3). In 2011 alone the play was performed more than 160 times around the world in different formats such as theatre, film and television (Holledge et al., 2016, p. 3). *A Doll's House, Part 2* premiered in 2017. This play is an imaginary sequel to Ibsen's classic written by American playwright Lucas Hnath, that shows Nora, who had chosen to leave her family and her roles within it, returning home fifteen years later. This play is an "exploration of repercussions, the rules of society and gender" and it explores whether it is possible for people "to communicate without stepping on others' rights and do no harm" (Luppi, 2017). This contemporary work further demonstrates the enduring relevance of this play in contemporary societies. In 2019 the original play was performed in different countries, including Aotearoa/New Zealand (September),[1] Chile (November)[2] and Spain (December).[3] *A Doll's House* is part of the selected readings in the English Literature and Theatre Studies curriculums of colleges and

[1] The website for the touring production is documented here at PANNZ.org
[2] Colectivo Zoológico talks about their production in an interview with elmostrador.cl
[3] Teatro Karpas promotes their production at Atrápalo.com

universities around the world (Holledge et al., 2016, p. 4). In Chile this work remains compulsory reading in many schools and universities,[4] thus demonstrating the enduring cross-cultural relevance of this text.

The multidisciplinary, collaborative, creative and experimental research project that this article discusses further extends Ibsen's work. We wanted to consider how the intersections between theatre and illustration might bring new perspectives to our understanding of the play. The translation of the text through the body and into a graphic form enabled us to create an illustrated book of *A Doll's House*, whose images constitute a parallel story to Ibsen's dramatic text with layers of meaning that can be 'read' in new ways.

The first phase of this ongoing project entitled *PROYECTO NORA,* explored, reflected upon and experimented with the use of the body, in the creation of the character, and in embodying her thoughts and feelings. The creative process of this first phase also explored the transfer of some of the aesthetic, expressive and representational codes of theatre into the realm of illustration. Similar creative processes can be found in a variety of interdisciplinary translation projects, including digital storytelling and drama (McGeoch & Hughes, 2009), the transfer of a silent movie into a theatre piece (Sapiaín Caro & Cortez Cid, 2020) and the use of comic imagery in theatre work (Conde Aldana & Cristancho Hernández, 2017). These projects have used stories as a starting point, translating, adapting and transferring them on to a stage or a screen whereas *Proyecto Nora* does a somewhat reverse translation. We are not only translating the text linguistically from English to Spanish, but also physically into theatre, creating embodiments which are ultimately transpositioned graphically and made static on the page once again. As far as we are aware after reviewing the literature, an experimental and interdisciplinary collaboration such as the one carried out through this project has not been done before. This article documents and reflects the unique and innovative methodological contribution this project makes to the fields of theatre and illustration.

From the beginning, this project was conceptualized through conversations between fellow artists, Carolina Schütte González who is a visual artists and illustrator, and myself, Moira Fortin a theatre practitioner, dancer and researcher/academic. We each brought

[4] A Digital School Library where *Casa de Muñecas* (*A Doll's House*) can be downloaded at CurrículumNacional.cl

different disciplinary backgrounds and methodologies to the creative process. Sections of dialogue between the two of us are included in this article to share insights into the collaborative emergent and dynamic nature of our conversations. I aim to create a synergy between our dialogue and the written text in order to question and to destabilize notions of "a fixed orality–literacy binary" (Halba et al., 2011, p. 71).

It is essential to situate ourselves as researchers in relationship to this project. As in any conversation we began by introducing ourselves, situating ourselves within cultural and geographical landscapes, by self-identifying and describing our positionality as researchers and artists:

> CAROLINA: My name is Carolina Schütte Gonzalez, I have Indigenous Chilean and German heritage. I was born in Santiago, and I am a graphic and multimedia designer and illustrator based in my home city in Chile. I have taught at tertiary level in Chile and have facilitated illustration and creative development workshops. I have integrated the commission to evaluate new projects by applying to the National Fund for the Promotion of Book and Reading.
>
> MOIRA: My name is Moira Fortin Cornejo. I have Indigenous Chilean, French, and Spanish heritage. I was born in Santiago, Chile, and have lived, studied, and worked in Rapa Nui, and Aotearoa conducting research following Pacific methodologies and epistemologies. I am an actress and dancer, and I am based in Dunedin in Aotearoa where I have been producing theatre with *The Collective*. With this ensemble I have had the opportunity to perform Latin-American texts in Spanish and English, creating bilingual and intercultural performances.

Carolina and I became friends when we were studying Architecture in Santiago together around 1998, but after about two years of being fellow students we decided to leave Architecture and pursue other careers. Our friendship endured. We kept in contact and met each time I returned to Santiago to visit. Carolina initiated this project first inviting me to contribute and collaborate with her in December 2018. Almost a year later, in November 2019, I travelled to Chile to begin collaborating

in this project. During one of the several conversations we had during the time we worked together, I asked Carolina about how the idea of illustrating *A Doll's House* was born:

> CAROLINA: I had read *A Doll's House* in high school, and in 2017 my daughter had to read it for school. As I had loved the play and now, she had to read it, I suggested to her that we could read it together, aloud, so naturally we were dividing up the roles as the reading progressed. And when we read it aloud, we began to interpret the roles, stopping to talk about the scenes, and about all the topics that the author was raising... family, personal fulfilment, the role of women, love, romantic love, beauty... and well as I am an illustrator and as we immersed ourselves in Nora's transformational journey, the idea of illustrating it came up. I wanted to get to know the author a little more and to get to know the codes of this unknown world of theatre. A conversation with someone from theatre was needed to understand the nature of the play and the idea coincided with your trip and then I told you and you were clearly interested...
>
> MOIRA: Yes, I was interested in the interdisciplinary possibilities inherent in this project, the potential for our collaboration to create new spaces for artistic dialogue through learning from other creative processes. Also, I loved the idea of illustrating a play. Until now I have performed in plays, but I have not participated in the illustration of one and I was fascinated to discover how the two disciplines could complement each other. It will be interesting to know what the terminology for conducting such work would be… translation? Adaptation? Graphic representation?

TRANSLATION, TRANSPOSITION AND THE CREATIVE POSSIBILITIES OF THE VOID

The term 'translation' stems from the Latin *translatio* ('transporting'), and it is generally used in the process of changing the language of an original written text into another language (Munday, 2016, p. 8). Translation Studies has a wide variety of fields of inquiry, including audio-visual translation which relates to a translation that takes place in audio and/or visual settings (Pedersen, 2010) through multiple

semiotic systems (Gottlieb, 2001). In other words it is a translation not only carried out through written or spoken words, but also via sound and/or images (Pérez-González, 2014).

Studies have debated regarding the relevance of concepts such as "adaptation, translation, transposition" when discussing the relationships between cinema (including images) and literature (including theatre (Sapiaín Caro & Cortez Cid, 2020, p. 169). We are most inclined to use the term transposition for PROYECTO NORA, since the term "places the accent on the (creative) process that operates in the transition from the literary medium to the film medium" (Cid, 2011, p. 24). In our case, from the dramaturgical, to physical and graphic mediums. The term transposition also "designates the idea of transfer, but also that of transplantation, of putting something in another place, of removing certain models, but thinking of another register or system" (Wolf, 2001, p. 16), thus moving away from the assumption inherent in the idea of translating a text from one language to another, that an accurate 'copy' of an original work can be made across languages. Instead, we are recognizing that the process of transposition creates a new object, precisely drawing from other languages, cultural contexts and disciplinary formats (Wolf, 2001).

Written products are intended primarily to be read, although some contain images, or photographs, which complement and/or enrich the verbal content. We argue that illustrated books are a hybrid, "as they are made up of images and words that are closely interconnected to create a narrative whole" (Chiaro, 2009, p. 142). Screen products as well as images produced on a blank page are polysemiotic spaces as they "are made up of numerous codes that interact to produce a single effect" (Chiaro, 2009, p. 142). This book is meant to be read and 'watched' simultaneously, therefore we are using a wide range of codes that would enable us to illustrate Nora's thoughts and emotions, including facial expressions, gestures, scenery, and costume (Chiaro, 2009). This approach will enable us to build a visual story of Nora's internal world, where the images will also become the narrative.

The visual codes we were aiming to produce were intended to generate a close dialogue with the original and to remain inextricably connected to the verbal aspect of the play itself. In her article about the transfer from literature to cinema, Adriana Cid (2011) explains that:

> […] any filmic transposition must be understood as the result of a

> complex creative process, of transmedia transformation, which is not limited to mere mechanical transfer operations, but bears the unmistakable stamp of the author. At a certain point in the genesis and making of the film […] there is an intersection of horizons between both artists, the writer and the filmmaker, and from that encounter, a singular (re) reading of the literary text emerges. It is not a question of hierarchical relationships of prestige, but of different identities that establish a mirror and independent relationship at the same time. (p. 28)

The idea of transmedia transformation undoubtedly applies to our research project, as Carolina and I bring our specific artistic experiences, embodiments, aesthetics and gendered experiences as women to understanding and interpreting the text.

But perhaps an interesting question to ask will be: Why did we choose to illustrate this play? Many classic plays are in constant processes of translation and adaptation. Most of the time in the process of translation the aim is for the words translated across languages to remain the 'same', but the visual aspect of a play and how it is staged varies from director to director, who may want to convey a different epoch, social and political context and identity of a specific play. The idea that written theatre is meant to be performed has been contested by Edward Gordon Craig who in *On the Art of the Theatre* (1911) suggested that for example Hamlet was complete when written, and "for us to add to it gestures, scene, costume or dance, is to hint that it is incomplete and needs these additions" (p. 143-144). This is an interesting notion, which contains genealogies of ideas which privilege and revere the written word and those people in society who are able to access it. Stark Young (1954) challenged this position explaining that "a word, a sentence, spoken in the theatre has from that moment been recreated in new terms and must stand a new test. It is no longer a word on a page but is translated now into a new medium, the theatre" (p. 29).

Anne Ubersfeld (1977) has pointed out that theatrical space is a complex construction, defining it as a text consciously created with 'holes' which could be filled by other texts, such as the mise-en-scène (Carlson, 1985, p. 9). According to Ubersfeld, this theatrical space derives from at least three sources: the text and the spaces of the diegetic universe, that is, the fictitious world in which the narrated

situations and events that the text proposes occur; the stage and its real physical characteristics, transformed or adapted through the resources of scenography and staging; and the audience, which constitutes the centre of attention of a set of perceptions that must be conducted in a certain way (Ubersfeld, 1999, p. 103).

In the same spirit we argue that adding illustrations to Ibsen's text does not mean that this work is incomplete, on the contrary, the amount of images it contains are inspiring enough to want to experiment with the illustration of Nora's world, evidencing the rich inner world these characters bring forward, especially Nora, supplementing and adding "in the sense of filling a void, perhaps even a void not apparent until the performance [or the illustrations were] created" (Carlson, 1985, p. 10).

However much they may be revered in the written form, playwrights ultimately create plays to be staged through performance, often including cues for staging within their written texts. Once a text is performed, it takes on new life and perspective through the bodies and minds of those people who perform and stage a production, encompassing new layers of meaning, context, tone, gesture and a multiplicity of new truths are generated. Images and illustrations document, explain and express, creating a "composite of words, people and place together" (Sligo & Tilley, 2011, p. 72), influencing "ideas, ways of living and pictures of the world" (Barnhurst et al., 2004, p. 63). We argue that placing images alongside Ibsen's text enlivens it, adding new layers of meaning. In doing so we have helped to create a text that contains similar aspects of multiplicity and layering that can be 'read' by audiences when a play is staged and performed. Images can gift viewers similar imaginative, interpretive and reflective space in which to make meaning:

> If a picture paints a thousand words, it is also true to say that it may be read in a thousand ways, and tell myriad stories, because pictures are always open to personal interpretation, and relatively inaccessible to any who lack very specific literacies. (Schirato & Webb, 2004, p.98)

THE LIMINAL THEATRICAITY OF *A DOLL'S HOUSE*

A Doll's House narrates the story of a marriage where the loss of family balance is perceived when socially accepted gendered codes of moral behaviour are not followed. Illusions of stability and security for women are shown as achievable only on the condition that wives conform to notions of women as submissive, weak and naive 'girls' before their husbands. Nora's journey throughout the play makes her question everything she has been taught to believe in since her marriage has been put to the test.

The play ends with the husband sitting alone, sadly watching his wife leave. This ending was extremely controversial when Ibsen first wrote it. Within nineteenth century society it was unthinkable that a woman would choose to abandon her marriage, house and children to pursue her own life goals. Ibsen's work was ground-breaking in recognising the gendered challenges women were facing at that time. In fact, it was so controversial that the play was repudiated by leading theatres in Norway and it had to wait eighteen years to be produced at Norway's National Theatre (McFarlane, 2008, p. ix). For the play to be performed in Germany, Ibsen was put "under strong pressure" (Ibsen, 2008, p. 87) by German translator Wilhelm Lange to write another ending, "because forces and discourses in the theatre world and society around 1880 made the new ending more or less necessary" (Janss, 2017, p. 4). Ibsen "reluctantly" (Ibsen, 2008, p. 87) wrote a more conciliatory ending which shows Nora not leaving her house as she is forced by Torvald to watch her children sleep. In this version Nora decides not to leave but Ibsen retains a sense of protest as Nora articulates that the decision to stay is "a sin against myself" (Ibsen, 2008, p. 88). Ibsen described this new ending as a "barbaric outrage" to his original vision and intent for the work, explaining the he "wrote this play just because of its ending" (Janss, 2017, p. 7).

Carolina's offer to collaborate excited me because of the explicit focus on Nora's journey from being a housewife with no opportunities to realising her ambitions to be an empowered woman, deciding for herself what she wanted for her life. A central theme in the play is the de-objectification of women. Through theatre the author wanted to explore "the fate of contemporary women whom society denied any reasonable opportunity for self-fulfilment in a male world" (McFarlane, 2008, p. ix). Sadly, this remains a current and relevant topic for the twenty-first century society.

> MOIRA: The number of women who, at least in Chile, still depend on their husband or partner to subsist tells us that there are still many women who do not have the necessary opportunities to be able to support themselves. And that in case of domestic abuse they cannot get out of the circle of violence because they do not have a job to support themselves or their children, and the state does not provide a social safety net through which to support them. This situation is also reflected in Nora's circumstances… and I think this is why this play and character remain current.
>
> CAROLINA: Yes. This play is relevant today for several reasons… even if we don't want to look at it from a feminist perspective…[5] more than seeing Nora as a woman who lacks skills or opportunities for self-fulfilment… She is a person who despite her history and circumstances and everything she goes through in the play… seeks her own truth, her individuality and her personal development. She is a woman who does not really fit and detaches herself from this normalized way of living where women do not have the right to pursue their own personal development.

Considering the concept of liminality proposed by the anthropologist Victor Turner and following the work of Diéguez (2007) I argue that there are plays such as *A Doll's House* "that escape the traditional taxonomies that have conditioned theatricality" (p. 8) generating "a complex area where life and art, the ethical condition and aesthetic creation intersect, as the action of presence in a medium of representational practices" (p. 17). These "liminal theatricalities" (Diéguez, 2007, p. 25) are in a border area of art and life and are

[5] In the last decade we have seen a resurgence of feminist ideas, reaffirming the importance of women in contemporary society. It is now possible to see greater number of women in positions of political power, however, there is still much to be done and many inequalities remain. Women are still underrepresented in all areas of leadership and generally still receive unequal pay for equal work. Although in the twenty-first century the position of women in society has changed significantly in terms of women's rights there are still many issues to discuss and define. I acknowledge that this notion feeds into the idea that there are binary identities that exist for men and women, and feminism has been challenging these ideas of fixed binaries identities for a long period of time. Although it can be argued that Ibsen's play is a feminist play, specific discussion of feminist theories and perspectives are outside the scope of this article.

“immersed in the ‘between’ of the cultural fabric and traversed by political and civic practices” (p. 41). Such works are inserted as actions in the political, social and public space (Sapiaín Caro & Cortez Cid, 2020). If we consider that Ibsen wrote this work, with its powerful and subversive ending in mind, this work brings to the stage a demand for the transformation of gendered roles, a plea that is made explicit and expressed through the text in the first instance, then shared through performances of the work. *PROYECTO NORA*, extends this project through consciously privileging Nora’s perspective and experience, contributing images that reveal the feelings and thoughts that led Nora to make the decision of leaving.

ILLUSTRATION AND THE BODY

In Spanish illustration that fulfils a purely decorative and elemental role at the service of the written text are known as *vasallaje*. These types of illustrations are made from previously written texts which can be sustained without the image. They are literal representations of what happens in the narrative (Rosero, 2010). Our collaborative project does not aim to simply illustrate what the texts says but seeks to travel through the embodiment of the character towards deeper understandings of Nora’s positionality and perspectives.

We aim to translate words into images, adding new aspects to help us towards a fuller understanding of Nora's universe, especially to grasp aspects that may not be spoken through words in the text. This approach to illustrating creates a process of clarification (Carroll, 2018) which generates new mental connections within the reader/viewer and relating to their previous knowledge. This dialogical relationship between text and image manages to create and resignify situations, facts or argumentative threads that a previously written narrative evokes directly or indirectly (Rosero, 2010). Nöel Carroll (2018, p. 276) explains that clarification occurs when the narrative work becomes “an opportunity to deepen our understanding of what we already know, being able to acquire new knowledge by deepening our understanding”.

Clarification as concept allows the illustrator an infinite space to play with signifiers, symbols and signals, thus generating a space to put into play poetic, literary, and/or dramatic/embodied connections in this case. We aimed to graphically represent Nora's silences, thoughts,

memories, emotions and sensations: the changes in perspective that, as the story progresses, portray the silent reasoning that leads her to react in certain ways throughout the play.

This project acknowledges the limitations of words and highlights the power of images, seeking to extend our understandings of characters through the body and empathy of the actor. Hall (1999) explains that:

> [t]he symbolic power of the image to signify is in no sense restricted to the conscious level and cannot always easily be expressed in words. In fact, this may be one of the ways in which the so-called power of the image differs from that of the linguistic sign. What is often said about the 'power of the image' is indeed that its impact is immediate and powerful even when its precise meaning remains, as it were, vague, suspended- numinous. (p. 311)

According to Edwards (1987), the formation and recall of visual imagery and sensations is closely associated with the experience of intense emotions. Sligo & Tilley (2011) also argue that "people tend to organize and retrieve strong emotions in visual form, and visual imagery potentially conveys more emotion than words" (p. 70). In the same spirit, this project contributes embodied, gestural, spatial, and contextual understandings, offering details that cannot be 'read' through words alone. The graphic transposition of *A Doll's House* offers us a space for observation and experimentation in which visual and performative codes of illustration and theatre can dialogue reflecting on Nora's positionality through an interdisciplinary, reflexive creative process.

> CAROLINA: During this project I was struck by your way of working with the body, your relationship with your corporality. Because in general when I illustrate my attention is in my head and in my hand, but it is very different to see how the emotion appears physically... when I saw you performing Nora for example, I thought, where do I feel the emotion? And I realized that when someone is sad they stand in a certain way or when someone is proud they open their chest... this project records

what the body offers in response to certain stimuli, producing eloquent creative material.

MOIRA: The interesting and challenging aspect will be to avoid the stereotype of the stylized body that is sometimes seen in more classic illustrations... and there we open a whole debate about the 'real' body... whatever that may be...

CAROLINA: The important aspect here is that it is not the stereotype of the body that a socially accepted woman is expected to have...

The art of illustration "has allowed many female illustrators to confront how they see their bodies" (Radtke, 2019) thus extending our understandings of gendered experiences. Although we were working with and through my body as the basis for the illustrations that Carolina will create, this did not mean the images she created would look like me. What we wanted to focus the work on was the gestures and postures, not the shape or size of the body or creating a portrait that was a representation of what my body actually looked like. This gave Carolina freedom of creation, allowing distance between my own body and the body of the illustration. This ability to reflect on the body with minimal constraints is an unusual opportunity for many women since "[a] body is the space no one can escape, and so it's the place from which we project ourselves onto the world, and receive its scrutiny" (Radtke, 2019). In the case of Nora, the plot of the play may not explicitly focus on Nora's body, however her role in the marriage is to entertain and dance for friends under the directions of her husband Torvald, wearing a specific socially acceptable costume. There are high expectations of how Nora's body should perform and look, and it is clear that her body is forced to continually represent and uphold gendered norms and stereotypes.

Although the actor's body does not operate outside of social, cultural and gendered norms and constructs, it is in many ways its own object, not free from constraints and limitations, however it is given space and permission to be playful and imaginative to create meaning and construct signs and symbols to express a range of specific theatrical realities (Krysinski & Gómez-Moriana, 1982, p. 19). The gestures created through this experimental methodology of using

performance to inspire and inform the illustration of a character or story, has gone through a process of reflective embodiment: starting in and moving through my body, my cultural background and all the experiences and ideas that are experienced through and embedded in my body, continuing with and through the words created by Ibsen, which were reflected on together with Carolina, and followed by the conceptualization of these words into gestures, that are finally expressed through the body (adapted from Krysinski and Gómez-Moriana, 1982, p. 22), and which ultimately move from this embodied 3D representation, into a 2D illustrated transposition, returning to the page.

We conceptualize illustration as a form of discourse. Through this project we propose a point of view where we can expose the physical responses to a certain situation or relationship, and foster female empowerment as the "visual arguments about women's bodies can operate quite differently than they do in live-action television, film or even prose novels" (Radtke, 2019). There is a freedom to express inspired by words but constrained by them. By transpositioning words into the physical expression of emotions and thoughts and illustrating them, we have the opportunity to show Nora's internal world in greater depth and complexity than would be achieved just by reading the play. We assume that an inaudible embodied world also exists and is important to our understanding.

OUR EXPERIMENTAL METHODOLOGY

In order to know what silences, thoughts and emotions we wanted to represent graphically, Carolina and I read Ibsen's work many times, engaging in detailed discursive analysis of each of the scenes, the characters, and the relationships between them. This type of analysis is an integral part of the actor's process when preparing to perform a play. The text is read and analysed in detail and this process can take several weeks.

The methodology with which we faced this research was organic, that is, we did not have a fixed or predetermined idea of exactly how we would do this research, so the *how* was adapted according to what we needed to do. Between March and October 2019, we held Skype meetings regularly, every two or three weeks. During that time one of

the aspects we considered was the location to photograph the images, postures and gestures that I would create. We had hoped to use the Campus of the Theatre School at *Universidad Católica*, better known as *Campus Oriente* in Santiago, as a setting for several reasons. As a former student at the school, it would have been easy to gain access to the campus and work there. Also, the Campus is a neoclassical building, which had previously been a convent, so it has corridors, stairs, patios, windows and walls that already have an atmosphere and an emotional charge that could have helped the physical externalization of silences, thoughts and emotions through gestures and postures. *Campus Oriente* also has rehearsal rooms, black and white boxes equipped with lighting consoles, providing a 'white' canvas where to try, in conjunction with lights and colours, ideas, shapes and movement as the expression of the world we inhabit.

This experimental collaboration was carried out between November 18th and December 20th, 2019. An unexpected limitation on the research was that on October 18th in Chile a series of social protests began against the government of President Piñera. This situation led to curfews being decreed on several occasions and universities were forced to close. This situation meant that we had to adapt our work schedule and rethink some aspects of our planning. At some point we even questioned the viability of the project as it became unclear whether it would even be possible for me to travel to Santiago. As we were no longer able to use *Campus Oriente*, we decided to use the white walls of a room, the dining room and a section of the backyard of Carolina's house as the backdrop for our photographs. Our ideal working hours, from 9am to 4pm, became in reality from 8am to 12pm because protests were occurring mostly in the afternoons, and it was 'safer' to move around the capital until noon. These factors forced us to work quickly, efficiently and strategically; all things that rarely occur in a creative process that is mostly based on trial and error and that requires time for ideas to settle and develop.

Once we determined our circumstances, we got to work. During the year, we had already read the play several times. Carolina reread the version she read with her daughter (Ibsen, 2016) (option 1) and while I was in New Zealand I read an English version (Ibsen, 2008) (option 2). When we met in Santiago, we created our own version of *Casa de Muñecas—A Doll's House* based on these two texts. Initially we thought about using the Spanish version, but after commenting on

the English version, we realized that the Spanish version had not only translated Ibsen's work but that the texts also laden with opinions from the translator who judged and valued the text by favouring one character over another. Another aspect we noticed was that the text was written using old-fashioned Spanish reminiscent of the type of language used in 1980's Latin-American soap operas, which does not relate to contemporary forms of expression.

Using a text that already gave a certain value to different characters seemed counterproductive. We wanted to offer a vision of Nora, in the few moments of solitude and intimacy that she has in the play, without judging if her reactions were correct or not. As neither of us spoke Norwegian and we did not have funds to commission a contemporary translation of the play into Spanish, we decided to read both versions in Spanish and English in order to produce a slightly more 'neutral' and contemporary way of communicating this story. Embodying Nora's thoughts, feelings and gestures in 2019, required a text reflecting the time in which we are living. The text is the source of inspiration for the creation of the gestures, it is necessary to have consistency so that the text and the gestures resonate and complement each other.

> MOIRA: We have to remember that in the world of theatre Ibsen's works are classified as realism, a theatre that shows you a particular reality… which was a mirror of the society of that time. The interesting aspect is that in 2019 that reality continues to be a mirror of gender roles in today's society. The challenge of performing realism, that I find particularly difficult to perform, is that your job as an actor is to make the viewer see an excerpt from someone's 'real' life. Actions, movements, gestures and language have to reflect that reality. Reactions and emotions have to be 'real' and one has to be aware of the process and the mental time that takes place before reacting, in order to give space to those moments so that the reaction is perceived as real.

> CAROLINA: … thinking about the dialogues, I often think of thousands of details that are often imperceptible moving like a whirlwind in everyday life and sometimes conversations are so trivial that you let so many things pass, but later as it remains in the memory they reappear.

> MOIRA: Ibsen is very economical and realistic in the dialogues, people normally say something and that is just the tip of the iceberg, so the conversation or the meaning of the conversations are completed through silences or through what is not being said... thoughts and feelings. After the first reading I asked myself: What exactly made Nora start considering the idea of leaving the house? Because for me initially it felt a bit abrupt and then suddenly you realize after reading the play again carefully and paying attention to all the details, implicit and unspoken in the text, when this idea starts to take shape.

After our text was ready, we read it aloud, paying attention to the motivations of each of the characters, to what each character said about others and to their relationship with Nora. We divided the play into fourteen scenes, and we gave each one a title that summarized the theme that we wanted to convey. This way of dividing the play into scenes also helped us visualize the illustrated book in its entirety, including the back covers where illustrations can also be added, a somewhat visual prologue and epilogue.

At the level of structure, the illustration considers the same argument as the dramatic work, so one medium dialogues with the other and rescues it to vindicate it, as a signifying system and as a play that, although it is from the nineteenth century, is still valid and very current. The following is a summary of the structure we decided to use to create the scenes to be embodied and illustrated:

> ***Back Cover – Prologue – Nora's Entry:***
>
> This illustration represents her own shadow. The play begins with Nora who returns from shopping and enters her house singing, relaxed. The illustration aims to show her silhouette reflecting on her life, remembering her duty, the role she must fulfil at home: the singing bird, the squirrel, the one who entertains, and beautify the home with her presence.
>
> ***Act I – Scene 1 – Nora's fragmentation:***
>
> In this scene we see Nora happy admiring the gifts she bought for Christmas and enjoying some macaroons hidden from her

husband. There is a fragmentation of who Nora is and who she should be in the eyes of her husband. Pleasure is not consistent with the roles she must play. For this illustration we thought of showing parts of Nora's body that are reflected in mirrors, fragmenting her. We also thought about highlighting a fast-moving sequence that Nora does to clean up the crumbs of macaroon when her husband enters the living room: her hand quickly wipes her mouth, and torso, moving down to her hips until reaching the pocket of her clothes.

Act I – Scene 2 – The male shadow:

In this scene Torvald reproaches Nora for spending money on Christmas gifts. Torvald hugs Nora from behind by the waist while berating her for the unnecessary expenses. This masculine shadow shows the husband as the extension of the demanding father, and we imagined Nora's discomfort, her resignation, hopelessness, and rage when listening to his criticism. For the illustration we thought of a closed and intimate frame of the head-hip section.

Act I – Scene 3 – The female shadow:

In this scene Cristina Linden enters the scene. There is a recognition between both women, but above all there is a comparison between the two. Rivalry, polarity, and violence are perceived. They look at each other and evaluate themselves like looking in a mirror, and the judgment that women make about the life and circumstances of other women arises. We perceive Nora's inner judgment about others, and her need to validate herself before others.

Image 1. Act I – Scene 3: Nora and Mrs. Linden evaluating their lives. Photo by Carolina Schütte and Moira Fortin.

Act I – Scene 4 – Empowerment:

In this scene Nora details the motivations to ask for the loan and thus be able to save her husband's life. The most significant part of this scene is when Nora narrates that she had to work as a copyist, a job done by men. “I almost felt like I a man” (Ibsen, Unpublished, p. 22) says Nora proudly, reflecting on the pleasure of personal fulfilment, of being able to decide as a woman about her own life. For the illustration we thought of Nora walking through her studio in the dim light, touching and admiring her typewriter.

Act I – Scene 5 – The arrival of Krogstad:

The arrival of Krogstad at the Helmer house awakens fear in Nora, fear of change, of evolution, of the unknown, a great deal of uncertainty about what could happen if the whole truth is discovered. Nora confesses the forgery of the signature to

Krogstad, a ruthless, determined man who is not moved by Nora's motivations. Right now, Nora feels vulnerable, because Krogstad arrives while Nora is playing with her children, and despite her perplexity, she must confront him by showing herself as confident and brave.

Image 2. Act I – Scene 5: Nora perplexed by seeing Krogstad in her house. Photo by Carolina Schütte and Moira Fortin.

Act I – Scene 6 – The total crisis:

The pressure and anguish that Nora feels. The terror of punishment, of making mistakes, of not being able to solve the problem on her own, the loneliness that this leads to of not being able to tell the secret out of fear. In a conversation with Torvald, where Nora is probing the ground to see her husband's position on this 'hypothetical issue', he launches an avalanche of recriminations to the wind, referring to the fact that it is the woman who perverts the children because she is the one who spends the most time with them and the one that takes care of their education. Therefore, the lack of ethics of the children should be paid by the mother with jail and social sanctions.

Act II – Scene 7 – The shadow of the mother:

In this scene Nora seeks contention. Ana is the woman who raised Nora since Nora's mother passed away when she was very young. As a mother's orphan, Nora lacks support, and a role model, and this is reflected in the lack of tools and options with

which some women face life. Ana represents the mother, the female lineage, the unconditional affection.

Act II – Scene 8 – Introspection:

This scene represents a series of feelings that Nora has regarding her current circumstances, for example the impotence of not being able to talk seriously with her husband, the anguish of being at the mercy of her reactivity, rigidity and under his tutelage. The powerlessness of not being able to think, decide, or act for herself, of being dependent on her husband, which makes her feel a little slave and quite alone.

Act II – Scene 9 – Complicity:

The horizontal and trusting relationship that Nora has with Doctor Rank. He is a friend of Nora's, with whom she can talk and discuss issues without fear of being recriminated, where the conflict is seen as a possibility for change. This scene seemed to us to be a mirror of Scene 2 of Nora with Torvald, but with love and without reproach.

Act II – Scene 10 – Nora imagines her death:

Once Krogstad leaves the letter in the mailbox, panic seizes Nora. She imagines the terrible future that Krogstad tells her and that he embodies. The impact is so great that the stage direction states: “after stifling a scream, she runs back to the sofa” (Ibsen, Unpublished, p. 74). Nora fears the future that she does not know how to face or resolve, and that despite showing herself as confident, she knows that Krogstad reads through her mask.

Image 3. Act II – Scene 10: Nora watching Krogstad leaving a letter in the mailbox. Photo by Carolina Schütte and Moira Fortin.

Act II – Scene 11 – Nora surrenders to destiny:

Nora makes her decision and is ready to accept the consequences of her actions. Nora celebrates her decision, empowers herself, and asks for champagne and macaroons. In this scene we experimented with the angle in which Carolina took the pictures. The blank page allows the illustrator to frame the image in any angle, not only using the x and y coordinates of the Cartesian plane, but also the diagonals.

Image 4. Act II – Scene 11: Nora toasting to her future. Photo by Carolina Schütte and Moira Fortin.

Act III – Scene 12 – The disguise of duty:

As a woman and a wife, Nora fulfils her duty to entertain and dances the tarantella for her friends at their party. She uses the party as a way of distracting Torvald and making sure he is in a good mood with her, so that she can talk about the letter later in the hope that he, as her husband, will understand, support and help her solve the problem she has with Krogstad.

Act III – Scene 13 – The wife—daughter binary:

After Torvald reads the letter, the male repression is felt. When reading this scene, it seemed to us as if Nora became part of his property but in a double sense: she has become his wife and daughter. Torvald's recrimination towards Nora, and the imposition at all costs of male desire and vision of the role of women. Torvald's desire to educate and punish his wife-daughter according to the role she must fulfil. After this discussion Nora goes to her room to change her clothes where she decides that it is time to leave.

Image 5. Act III – Scene 13: Nora changing her party costume and putting her clothes on. Photo by Carolina Schütte and Moira Fortin.

End of Act III – Scene 14 – Liberation:

It is in this scene that Nora expresses herself with complete clarity and confidence regarding her circumstances as a woman and wife. She has a critical vision of society, her marriage, and the static role of women throughout history. This time Nora faces the future with hope and sees it as a possibility for change and self-development.

Image 6. Act III – Scene 13: Nora ready to confront her husband and leave. Photo by Carolina Schütte and Moira Fortin.

Back Cover – Epilogue – The closing:

Once Nora closes the door of the house and leaves the marriage for good, Torvald is left alone with his children. That silence is quite loud since for the first time he has no other adult to reproach and educate. Nora closes a chapter of her life and leaves so as not to return, locking all the difficult experiences in the house.

To each scene we allocated an arrow indicating the energy and mood with which Nora faced these scenes, thus creating an emotional map of Nora throughout the play. This emotional map helped us to have a clear idea of what we wanted to express in each scene, the mood of each scene.

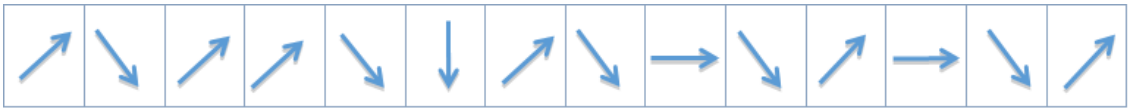

Image 7. Emotional map of Nora throughout the play.

By working at Carolina's home and using the white walls of her house as a background, we realised that the colour of the walls, was equally important to the analysis of the text and the creation of gestures and posture. At the beginning of the rehearsals, we had a conversation about the theatrical space, that is, the use of the black box as a background and what it involved in the production of a play. In theatre the black box allows actors to hide, so that the changes of scene or the entrance of characters are as if by magic. The black box also allows the use of the twilight (semidarkness), where the spectator cannot see clearly or can only see fragments. In the black box, light plays a very important role, because it directs the attention of the audience. In contrast, the white box, with which we finally worked, does not allow us to hide anything, it rather shows everything, without hesitation. Scene changes, character inputs are open to the view, the audience can see the space and the full context, and the movements, actions and words are what capture and guide the audience's attention. In the art of illustration, the technique used to show fragments is to move the scene partially out of frame. As this project is an intersection between theatre and illustration we can play and change the black box for the white box, depending on what we want to show, hide, or fragment. So, we thought it would be interesting to start in the black box going through the grey box and ending in the white box, demonstrating Nora's journey.

As we were progressing in the project nearing the end of my stay in Santiago, we had already tried and recorded various postures and gestures, we thought it would be interesting to create a somewhat graphic summary of Nora's journey. For this we created a collage with different images that we downloaded from the internet (Image 8.) and that served as a map to test different postures and gestures. Each of these images corresponds to a scene, so each illustration created based on the photographs and videos we took are summarised in this set of images that will go on the corresponding page in the book, but they will also be part of the illustrated graphic summary, offering a sequence of images expressing movement, emotion, action and Nora's

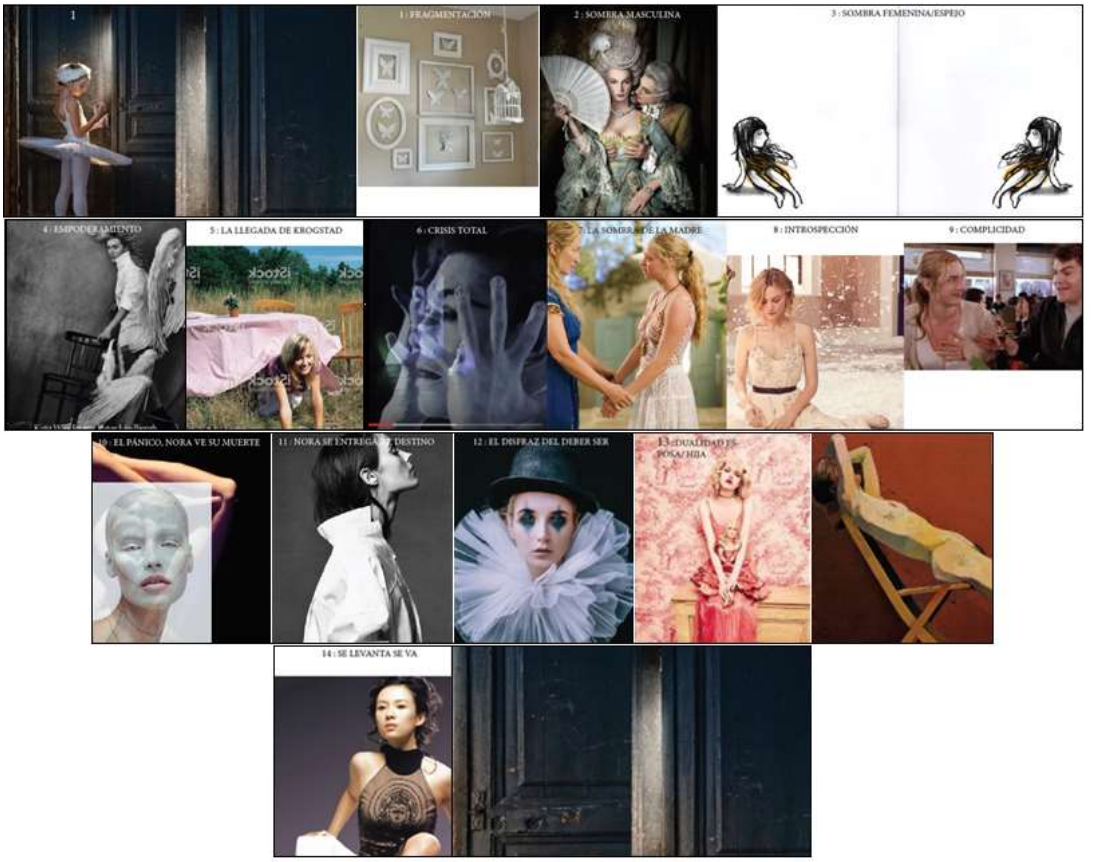

Image 8. Map of the physical expressions of Nora's thoughts and feelings throughout the play.

feeling about each scene.

The notion of clarification that drives all the interpretive power of the illustrator together with the deconstruction of stories, characters, ideas and concepts that are used in the taxonomy have the function of accounting for the entire universe that is being composed around the creation of the book, and how this requires meticulous observation that allows its problematization and understanding (Rosero, 2010). We hope this sequence will go at the end of the book, a kind of visual bonus track of the whole journey.

The challenge now is to join both disciplines, that is, how the physical expression of the character, the postures and gestures that gave life to Nora are reflected on paper. To achieve this transfer, it is necessary to take into account three factors that are transversal in illustration and theatre; light, movement and colour, which are crucial

when creating the atmosphere of the scene and composing the illustration on the page.

> CAROLINA: Light is the key element in the construction of the body as a sculptural object. Light shows the body of the individual and his universe, helping to build identity. Light makes us look a certain way. It is under this light that one judges oneself and others and reflects on how I see myself, or do not see myself, how others see me and whether or not I like what it is seen. Colour is the element that gives quality, intensity and variety to the story. Colour, like light, makes parallel stories visible, accentuating specific moments or sections, creating atmospheres and emphasizing emotions and points of view in the same scene. Movement...
>
> MOIRA: Movement is what makes us appear in the world, it's how we speak to the world, how our reactions are shaped, our emotions and thoughts are also expressed through movement... I am very curious to see what the illustrations you create will look like... theatre is very immediate... I mean we have a process of creating but as we are creating and developing each scene, I can see how the whole play will look like. So far, I haven't seen any drawings... I know your work... and how you draw, your style... but I haven't seen anything about Nora... and that is very exciting.....
>
> CAROLINA: ...yes, I can imagine, because I work with another timeframe... In theatre you rehearse and show, in illustration I have to wait, I draw by hand, and I make lots of sketches and they tend to change, so I wait and see if the last drawing I made is the one I am after, after that I start colouring and then I have to wait for the ink to dry... it's like making bread... you have to allow time for waiting.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this interdisciplinary, collaborative, creative process we experimented with the methodology to explore and reflect upon how the performance of emotions, thoughts and feelings could constitute a parallel story to the written text and inform the illustrations of the main

female character of the story. The unique nature of this project contributes to create a new space for collaboration and experimentation, where it is possible to reflect on our own way of working. Dividing the work into themes and sections that have their own title helped us to focus on the exact moments we wanted to work on. The actor's work usually begins by reflecting on what was said, on the written word, very seldom do we begin to work from within the spaces and silences, from what was not said. The work on emotions is something that happens gradually, as one understands and delves into the text. In this case we were looking specifically at those silences, the few moments when Nora is alone and can think, reflect and has time to feel. In the case of the illustration, this method also supported the different lenses used recording and photographing the different scenes. Since these images are on paper, the illustrator could use different angles, showing a view from above, inclined, diagonal, and/or only showing a fraction of the body. Analysing the play and defining these key moments enabled us to explore different ways of conceptualizing the flow and rhythm of the play and Nora's journey. The emotional map, for example, was also a great technique for self-discovery where both artists can see how these emotions are shaping up. It worked as a reminder of what energy the actor should have, and the mood that the illustration has to show for that particular moment.

Through this experimental work, we hope to create a relationship between the written and the iconic level that will serve to overcome flat or homogeneous readings, fostering the construction of a model reader, capable of creating meaning from the multiple associations between images and words (Sipey & Brightman, 2009). Illustrated books have the ability to break predictable linear narrative sequences at the same time as opening "a range of beginnings, developments and endings" (Ordoñez-Trujillo, 2018, p. 101). Although in the future, we will propose well-defined illustrations it is important to understand that, as Foucault observes, "there is no primal coherent set of signs, but only interpretations" (Foucault, 1982, p. 12), encouraging futures readers/watchers of this work to propose their own interpretations of Nora's journey.

This is a work in progress. Due to COVID-19 and other health issues as well as social and political uprisings in Chile, the production of illustrations has been delayed. Throughout this interdisciplinary collaboration I realized that this project was a dialogue between

mirroring disciplines. Both art forms work with stories, characters, atmosphere, movement, costumes, light and colour. After working with Carolina, I had the impression that illustration is a two-dimensional version of theatre. Our methodology led us to test postures and gestures produced in a tangible corporality, which will then be translated into an illustration, transforming this physicality into two-dimensional gestures and postures on paper.

After the illustrations are ready, hopefully sometime in 2021, the aesthetic created for these illustrations will become the blueprint for the aesthetic of the play. It is here where the illustrations and the aesthetics created will once again be transformed and transpositioned back into three-dimensional to be inhabited by the actors giving life to Ibsen's characters. Throughout this project, we hope that our work will create an encounter with the readers through the illustrated book and with the audience of the play, where hopefully they will be able to recognize themselves in Nora's journey.

It was a valuable and interesting experience to collaborate in this project. I was fortunate to be working with a friend and colleague, learning from her expertise in her field, about her creative process. I experienced how different and yet sometimes how similar it is from my creative process in theatre and how both processes can create an encounter for disciplines to connect and dialogue in the creation of something new: the illustrated version of a play.

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Picture Other Voices—A Conflict Transformation Drama Project

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ABSTRACT

This project explores how immersive and Forum Theatre can be used to help resolve conflict in school. Kate Beales and Dawn Ingleson worked with 8–11 year-old children from a London Primary School Federation. Inspired by the picture book, Voices in the Park*, by Anthony Browne, workshops included applied theatre methodologies and drew on conflict resolution models including, Nonviolent Communication (Rosenberg, 2015), Systems Theory (Walker, 2012) and Philosophy for Children (Lipman, 1988, Glina, 2012) to create a simultaneous community of inquiry and practice using versions of Forum Theatre (Boal, 2019) and Process Drama (Taylor, 2005) via a journey of immersive practice.*

The children were invited to resolve a conflict having chosen a character to follow. In immersive theatre, 'Audiences must make choices about where they go, the characters they follow and the rooms they find. They choose the show they see' (Higgin, 2017). The

experience involved the audience deliberately privileging some aspects of the narrative over others—just as participants would in a conflict.

This paper discusses the findings of the project demonstrating that the children could explore broader perspectives than those visible and express empathy in their reflections on character behaviour. Findings are valuable for Headteachers looking to improve school ethos, inclusion and inhibit social barriers to learning.

PART 1: THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Dawn Ingleson led this project with Kate Beales, a participatory arts practitioner, community mediator and conflict coach. The project used drama to explore conflict resolution in a school community that had issues of bullying and a lack of social cohesion. This was inspired by the author's own primary school teaching experience, studies using interactive drama to tackle conflict with older children in schools (Catterall, 2007; Burton, 2002; Malm, 2007) and the parallels found between social science and theatre methodologies focusing on the experience of the audience/participants.

This paper explores conflict resolution/transformation through both social sciences and (applied) theatre methodologies. The project discussed in part two is framed by the guiding pedagogy of Philosophy for Children (P4C) (Glina, 2013), and Systems Theory (Walker, 2012). The relationship between the audience-participants, the performers and facilitators has been conceived by drawing on Immersive Theatre (Machon, 2013) and Forum Theatre (Boal, 2009). Mantle of the Expert (Heathcote, 1995) techniques are leaned on, to a point, as is Process Drama (O'Neill, as cited in Taylor, 2005) as well as Stanislavski systems (Stanislavski, 2016).

As Caterall expounds in his study with teenagers, 'prominent theorists would agree that understanding grows through opportunities to try out, consider and revise one's thinking' (Anderson, as cited in Caterall, 2007). Using shared beliefs between P4C and applied theatre making we investigated what we needed to create a community of inquiry and practice with our audience-participants. Borrowing the term 'community of inquiry' from John Dewey, through Matthew Lipman, where Lipman has widened the definition of knowledge from 'being

embedded within a social context' to 'being embedded within a classroom', we applied Lipman's definition and extended it to include the idea of Wenger's community of practice (Wenger, 1998). This would encompass the children and adults creating and presenting work together and for each other to engender collaborative learning.

We used immersive theatre and Forum Theatre as our vehicles to create such a community. As in P4C, discussed by Beate Børresen, where 'philosophical activity is based on the recognition of ignorance,' and, 'the philosopher's thirst for knowledge is shown through attempts to find better answers to questions even if those answers are never found,' we used Forum Theatre to 'attempt to find better answers' even if they were elusive. Using these techniques, we asked teachers and facilitators, to, 'value mistakes and use them for better understanding' of, in this case, managing conflict situations (Børresen, as cited in Glina, 2013). Choosing to use immersive theatre, we embraced the encouragement of freedom, choice and empowerment for the spectator (our audience-participants). As Neild states, in Rose Biggin's book about Punchdrunk, one of the U.K.'s exemplary immersive theatre companies, 'both in epic and intimate forms' (Machon, 2013), immersive theatre is a theatre in which, 'the audience inhabit the space of the play alongside the actors', and, more importantly for us, in relation to Systems Theory and our conclusion in Forum work, the 'audience-participants shape and discover their own through-lines' (Biggin, 2017).

Systems Theory, a methodology used in social and conflict resolution work, was employed in a dramatic form. In social work, it is applied to social structures like a family. Here we explored it to discover characters' backstories and reasons for behaviour in certain circumstances (this paralleled more familiar Stanislavskian techniques of given circumstances and character work). As Walker cites from previous work, 'as individuals we will each have our own slant, bias, preferences or interpretation of the facts and it is more effective to share these in a family meeting' (Walker & Akister, as cited in Walker, 2012). We fabricated moments of theatre that would be missed while participants watched another scene happening at the same time, thus the 'family meeting' became the school hall when we all could eventually share our thoughts and disparate knowledge on story and characters. We were interested in the children experiencing, as John Bowlby explored in the late 60's, that 'there is an interconnectedness

of families, groups, communities, etc.,' (Walker, 2012).

PART 2: THE PROJECT

The groups of 8-11 year-olds that we worked with attended the Shine-on-Saturday School. Shine is an education charity that funds the school giving the federation 60 disengaged 8-11 year-olds the opportunity to participate in a hands-on, creative learning experience every Saturday during term-time.

We worked with the group to create two workshops, each lasting 90 minutes, running twice. The workshops were 3 weeks apart.

Our objective was to create a piece of immersive theatre in primary schools to explore conflict situations and develop tools for managing conflict within and outside school. Renowned U.K. Theatre-In-Education (TIE) Company, Big Brum's artistic policy explains the potential power of good quality TIE:

> TIE…is the point of mediation between the young people and the world they inhabit. Learning takes place through a dramatic situation that matters to the participants… They are free to make decisions and take full responsibility for their actions safely in the fiction of the drama… Through the imagination in action, playfully contested amongst peers, the participants test future possibilities, creating a different reality explored dramatically. (Big Brum Artistic Policy, 2021)

Inspired by Punchdrunk, we wanted to support children in conflict resolution/transformation in their lives plus see if they would make their own decisions in moments of drama. We wanted to give them the freedom to make choices, at key moments, of who to follow. Drawing on original concepts of TIE and elements of 'student in role' Process Drama, we wanted to explore what happens if individuals selected their own journey through the drama and were not guided by rules or a grown-up narrator role. This happens in adult immersive productions, for example *The Masque of the Red Death* at Battersea Arts Centre (Punchdrunk, n. d.; Biggin, 2017). This audience chose which rooms to enter and therefore which journey to go on, missing elements of the same story along the way, creating their own version of what was

happening. Like Helen Freshwater in Biggin's book, we wanted 'to know what a young audience can handle, what they bring and what they understand from the experience'. We did not want to, as some immersive theatre is accused of, 'intervene to police the spectacle' (Biggin, 2017).

Before we entered the narrative, we wanted to discover the stories this cohort was interested in, what kind of tales they told. Once they had shared this, we explored what was behind the decisions taken by their protagonists, what did other characters think about the action? How did it affect broader groups beyond the centre of the story? What happens to the story when we uncover all this invisible information? In other words, we were exploring backstory, perspective, and assumption. This approach aligns broadly with Systems Theory—a key tool in unraveling and understanding conflict through questioning narrative in relation to the bigger picture.

In our first workshop, the children improvised stories and developed characters and backstories. We began with a simple improvisation in pairs, asking the participants to create a character each. The dialogue had a level of realism and truth about it as it came from a direct place of some formed experience or knowledge: Child A knocks on Child B's door. Examples we gave included a sibling's bedroom door, a neighbour's door etc. A door perhaps suggesting a difference in the characters' perspectives and a potential conflict. From this 2-minute improvisation we built the full narrative with parallel scenes showing all the action of the story in which things happen simultaneously.

The children start to make their own judgements about the two characters they play as do the audience-participants (e.g., Child A (playing a child) is 'rude' and 'not listening', Child B (playing a neighbour) is 'annoyed' and 'doesn't care'). We hot seat them. We wonder, as a group, whether they should hear each other's answers to the questions—we discuss what the difference would be either way. We all want to know everything at this point, interestingly, this is the privileged, omnipresent point of view that we have when we sit watching traditional theatre unfold, but it is not what happens in real life. We conclude that they are not the only people who are affected by this 'knock on the door'. Other characters are built into the storyline, and we start to understand why the first characters were reacting to the scenario and the questions being asked of them in the mini scene as

the different but entwined narratives unfold.

Suddenly, we have all these perspectives (like the neighbour's boss who is waiting for some work and the sleeping mum who is ill). We therefore start to understand more about literally 'where they are coming from'. Before we had this knowledge, we had all made our own assumptions. Now, we see them in a different light. We wanted to investigate this further and see more closely how high the stakes were for these two characters to get their own way (*achieve their objective* (Stanislavski, 2016; Alfreds, 2007), by widening the narrative so we could see the connected scenes happening elsewhere.

Together, we not only use Stanislavskian techniques of analysing the world of the emerging play, but we also think about real world issues of actions and consequences, our responsibilities to others and how this affects how we behave. In both real life and in the drama, we start to understand what is at risk if characters fail to achieve what they want. The participants start to recognise that we are working on two levels:

> You could use it [what we have learned today] when you're in the playground and then you accidentally hurt someone, and that person's friend comes and starts arguing with you.
>
> You can use not just what we learnt but the acting skills as well. (Participants, *Picture Other Voices*).

After we have created another three or four scenes for each scenario that we choose to highlight as examples of the complexity of why people behave the way they do in situations (including a full fire engine team caught just before their shift ends being called to a house fire that has been set off accidently by one of the characters in a different scenario), we end with a debrief. We discuss any useful moments and mistakes the characters might have made. We also ask the participants, 'how easy or difficult was it to see from the outside what to do?' We reflect on the experience and compare what happens when you are in it and when you are standing outside of it. We used this reflection to unpick whether they, as a group, understood that they had experienced different perspectives and we wanted to see if we all agreed on the central moment—the core of the story. The teachers agreed that they had grasped these concepts. "The children were

picking up the smallest things they wouldn't normally notice" (Shine Worker).

Simultaneously we were modelling nonviolent communication (Rosenberg, 2015) —a technique used to create empathy and support collaboration—and using non-judgemental language (Kohn, 2001). We did this by discussing the characters' needs and refrained from criticising or even praising them, a technique used by Bamboozle Theatre, a U.K. company that creates immersive productions for disabled children. Focusing on a character's needs is valuable in interpreting a drama but it is essential if we want to transform a conflict. In nonviolent communication, we aim to connect to the other person's need that is not being met, most times, this means that we must actively listen to and observe what is happening in front of us to discover what the need is—this may be hidden by feelings being expressed that are not helpful in these moments.

The children's stories were a combination of lived experiences, fantasy based on film and TV imagery. They could explore broader perspectives than those visible at first sight and they expressed empathy in their reflections on character behaviour. They were able to listen to the perspectives of others and assess their relevance in solving the problems presented by the stories.

In the second workshop, we used the picture book, *Voices in the Park* by Anthony Browne. The book is written in four parts, four different perspectives of what happens when two sets of children and parents go to the park and see each other. The dogs play easily together, the children are more tentative but finally play and become friendly and the mother and the father do not communicate. There are judgments made about all the characters, from all four voices that we hear at different times. The concept of Browne's picture books is that all his characters are apes, dressed as humans. There is a surreal quality to his artwork and his attitude to his books works well for our drama:

> What excites me about picture books is the gap between pictures and words. Sometimes the pictures can tell a slightly different story or tell more about the story, about how someone is thinking or feeling. (Browne, as cited in Salter, 2009)

In the same way, we use drama to show us the needs behind the

words, like the images in a good picture book, there is more to a character than what they say. As Sarah Crown, in her interview with Browne states, there is an atmosphere of ambiguity and, “the implication that nothing, not even what’s before our eyes, can be relied on” (Crown, 2009).

In our piece, four actors played human versions of the book's characters. We adapted the story to include a conflict. The characters were, Mother, Charles (her son), Father and Smudge (his daughter).

One of our objectives was to discover how the children would respond to the openness of immersive theatre. We, as practitioners, already had experience in creating promenade performance, in which children are guided through the story and shown where to put their attention. A truly immersive experience, however, leaves the audience at liberty to watch where they choose, and involves deliberately privileging some aspects of the narrative over others—just as participants would in a conflict. As Pete Higgin, director of Punchdrunk Enrichment, the educational arm of U.K.’s Punchdrunk theatre states, “Audiences must make choices about where they go, the characters they follow and the rooms they find. They choose the show they see” (Higgin, 2017).

We created a simple immersive structure using the two families from the book and playing scenes from their homes in two separate rooms off the school hall. We used the headteacher’s office which looked like a flat with a living room area, a kitchen, plants, piano and a desk and chair. This was Mother and Charles’ home. The more lived-in looking classroom next door was the space we dressed to become Smudge and her dad’s place with an ironing board out, a kitchen table, washing up in bowl, sofa and clothes drying on radiators and the backs of chairs. The children were given the freedom to choose which space they entered in response to a theatrical "hook”—a sound from each room which stimulated their curiosity. We used a short burst of a tune from a trumpet from Charles’ house and a scream from Smudge’s. We wanted to observe how they would manage the initial decision-making process about what to watch.

This happened quickly and effortlessly. Although we had warned the actors to expect anything, including all the children going into the same room with their friends, the group split roughly in half without much discussion.

Once in their separate rooms, the children were in the homes of

the two families. There were no separate audience areas, so the children decided where to stand/sit in the characters' kitchens, and how to interact with the scene. Some children became absorbed in the activities of the characters, for example helping with Charles' jigsaw puzzle or Smudge's word search, while others simply observed.

We wanted the experience to be an egalitarian one. We did not want to push any mode of involvement to the forefront. It was an equally shared space between immersion, participation, spectating, witnessing, and facilitating change. However, there were children in the room that were more confident than others, had read the book we had adapted, had a different relationship to others in the room itself and indeed the spaces we were using. We tried to mitigate some of these imbalances by being clear about having no rules. They, despite everything else in place historically, were in charge of their own experience today and were invited to relate to anything they chose to watch (or not watch) in any way they wanted to. We needed the relationship between space, performer, workshop leader—Joker (for the Forum elements) and participant to be reciprocal. Unlike the 'creation of immersive experience for the 'absent, idealized spectator'', which, states Biggin, is 'how [immersive] productions are conceived, designed, and rehearsed,' part of this project was about problematizing the concept of audience/workshop participant and exploring the possible ways (without the shepherding and coercing from an adult in power) that the young people would naturally respond. This was important to encourage empathy and develop a sense of community in philosophical and practical terms. The children were very quick to understand the conventions of the performance. For example, when watching the scene between Mother and Charles, which began at the kitchen table, the children gathered around it. When Mother mentioned that Charles should practice the piano, they immediately moved to the piano in anticipation of the actors changing scene.

The scenes happened in the morning. Mother made breakfast and tidied it away. Charles did homework and music practice. The father looked for a job in the paper and Smudge made breakfast and talked about school. After 15 minutes, they were ready.

At a signal, the characters left to go to the park. During the scenes in the separate rooms, the hall was transformed into a park where all the characters meet (done quickly and quietly by a small group of project leaders/teachers). We used AstroTurf, plants, park benches, a

goal and football. This was met with much excitement. The actors played football among the children and sat on benches around the playing area. We were keen to see how the children would manage the freedom of sitting in the park and being inside the football game. They responded with full attention—passing the football only to return it to the actors. Some sat on the benches next to the actors but did not disturb the action.

'Charles' and 'Smudge' met and after some awkward first moments, talked and played football. The parents kept far apart. Charles had brought his expensive mobile phone with him (he had earlier been told not to) and without anyone seeing, it fell (during an energetic tackle from Smudge), and broke. There was an exclamation from Smudge and Charles (neither of whom blamed the other) and this brought it to the attention of the parents. The Mother seemed furious and blamed Smudge for tackling Charles. She also questioned why Smudge's dad was busy reading the paper and therefore could not see what had happened. Angry words were said between the parents, and they were not shy in suggesting who was to blame.

After the conflict, the families returned to their separate homes and the audience had to decide who to follow. The choice was more difficult as the children had more knowledge, and some were clearly torn as to which room to enter. They were working out their 'own through-lines' and some were allowing the focus to 'shift away from one protagonist' (Machon, as cited in Biggin, 2017) to another. However, the transition was swift and without any disruption of the story. The two families played out a short response to the conflict which ended with both adults leaving Charles and Smudge alone. The audience remained to listen to their reflections. They both talked out loud and decided to write a letter apologising.

At the end of the performance, the children returned to the hall. Dawn and Kate led a discussion in which the children responded to what they had seen. The class was asked who should take responsibility for the conflict—the responses included all characters with reasons why. The children then created a list of questions—the actors returned in character to answer them. In each case, the answers led to a deeper empathy for the characters, even when the children had been mistrustful and had judged a particular character's behaviour. For example, they learned that Mother was very anxious about Charles, whereas her behaviour had them believe that she was

antagonistic and judgmental. After the children questioned the actors and understood their motives more fully, they were invited to recreate the scene and construct a more positive ending. The actors played the scene several times, stopping and starting the action to incorporate the children's suggestions until a satisfactory outcome could be reached.

In both sessions, the children worked hard towards a positive outcome. In both cases, it depended on listening, exploring, and understanding each character's motivation, stopping the story before emotions became heightened, and solving problems using the knowledge the children had collectively about the two families.

The shared experience of Forum Theatre like P4C, 'emphasise[s] that understanding, and learning are processes in which we engage in together, with others and with help from others' knowledge, experiences, and ideas' (Walker, 2017).

One striking example of this process was the moment in which children urged Mother to give the Father the broken phone to fix. Children who had been in the Mother's house were afraid that the Father would steal the phone. We asked children who had been in the Father's house whether he was the sort of person who would do this, the answer: a resounding No. They had heard him talk with Smudge, be kind and thoughtful and equally important, he had a toolbox and was very good at fixing things! This enabled the whole group to advise the Mother to trust the Father to help her and led to a resolution of the conflict.

The children liked being able to rewind and rewrite the action—unlike in books. They also enjoyed being able to travel around the different spaces—unlike in a traditional theatre production. They were acting and thinking on what Monica Glina calls, in philosophy, a 'meta-level'. Together we were creating a better community (of inquiry and practice):

> It made me feel like I was actually in the play.
>
> The play…gave everybody a chance to speak so you can find out what actually happened if you weren't there.
>
> Blame does not help—it just makes anger worse; people start getting sad and shouting.

> Be honest or people won't trust you in the future. (Participants, *Picture Other Voices*)

In response to the question, 'From what you've learnt today can you think of any places where you could use this':

> In the playground if you've got into a fight—ask why… and what really happened… like Smudge in the scene.
>
> With your family. (Participants, *Picture Other Voices*)

The responses from participants and leaders communicated an understanding of what they had achieved. They felt involved in the story by proximity during it and by listening to the other children and, either discussing the questions to ask the characters and/or being involved in the drama with them.

The children started the forum by taking the role of director and telling a character what to say and watching to see if that had any positive affect on the scenario. After several attempts, (the actors made it realistically difficult for the participants to change the situation) the children had a go at taking over from the actors to change the affect that the broken phone had. Unlike a traditional Forum Theatre format, in our drama, the children could take anyone's place as we were trying to recognise that everyone in a conflict situation has a backstory and can be or feel oppressed in different ways. The way we responded to the performance therefore became a mixture of Process Drama, as pupils took on different roles, (Taylor & Warner, 2005) and Forum Theatre.

We gained our results from filming the workshops for further analysis and interviewing the children and teaching staff. We were lucky to have the rooms we had in this school, moving forward we must resolve how a project using strategies of immersive/interactive performance (in separate rooms) and Forum Theatre can be repeated. Does it become a Punchdrunk Enrichment school type residency fully staffed and resourced (and funded) from a design perspective, or does it develop with teacher training and teacher-in-role (Heathcote, 1995) sessions (or both)? We understand the profound impact of theatre, but more research needs to be carried out into how inclusive we can make this type of work so that it can be used as part of a bigger mediation

and conflict transformation scheme across a whole school community. We are exploring how we develop the pilot into a fully-fledged programme that can create a legacy in school. With teacher consultation, we want to explore the possibility of pre-performance teacher CPD, and pre/post-show materials which may involve input from other Conflict Resolution specialists (e.g., peer mediators and mediation services with specialist teams) working with children.

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Rehearsing for Change: Freire, Play, and Making It Real[1]

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the process and impact of building an ethnodrama in a Higher Education classroom. It examines the ways in which play, image theatre, and improvisation are used to invite students to explore their individual and collective narratives in order to develop professional identity and personal agency. This work is based on Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed *and Boal's* Theatre of the Oppressed*. An example class in which students analyse the key concepts of privilege, opportunity, knowledge, democracy and education is described and located within the process of building the ethnodrama. Student responses to the experience of participating in building an ethnodrama are examined. In particular, their perceptions of the enactment of change in the process of making the play, and*

[1] This work has ethics approval from Victoria University, Melbourne, number 0000024773. Students' names have been changed; dates accompanying student names indicate the year of the student's study. Participating students signed consent forms.

playing within the play, highlight their understandings of themselves as changed people, and their sense of collaborative and community empowerment.

SETTING THE SCENE

Drama is used as a tool to introduce students to each other, and to ideas, in the introductory unit, Academic and Professional Learning, as it is taught in the Diploma of Education Studies at Victoria University, Melbourne. It is embedded in the practice and the assessment for the unit; but it is also developed to critique systems and find alternative ways of engaging with learning. We have taught this unit in this way since February 2016. On average 200 students undertake this unit each year. They learn about the processes, expectations and culture of higher education, through Drama. Between 2016 and 2019 the teaching team conducted a research project, gathering data from student journals, reflections, and assessments, to investigate whether this change in practice—teaching a traditional 'introduction to university' style of unit through Drama—made a difference to the type or quality of student learning, and the students' engagement and motivation within the course. We have now read and analysed more than 1000 student journals (these captured students' responses from the first session to the last week of class), and close to 4,000 additional reflections, written in response to specific prompt questions. I will draw on those journals and reflections to investigate the student experience of this unit. This paper is a narrative account of the experiential change that students report while studying the unit, and asks what we did as teachers to facilitate and support that change.

In this paper I will describe our aims in the unit; outline a class which introduces students to Freire; and narrate ways students then develop their learning into ethnodrama. Almost all students observe changes in themselves, their communication, their collaborative processes and their connections to learning through their experiences in building the ethnodrama. I seek to untangle whether it is the process of building an ethnodrama which influences students' thinking, their ways of engaging with learning, and their perceptions of themselves and each other. In this context, it is important to note that claims for 'transformative' experiences through applied theatre projects have

been challenged by Snyder-Young (2013) and Balfour (2009). They question how ‘change’ can be measured or understood. Snyder-Young asks whether theatre is a powerful enough tool to generate the transformative change that is often claimed, or whether this is primarily an affective response which dissipates after the performance. The students in this unit do claim to experience change in themselves and in their relationships with the world. I will explore whether it is something in the process of the unit that prompts students to report these changes. Can we identify moments and experiences where shift in perception of self and others takes place? And if that is possible, can we also identify what factors impacted on any shift?

Let me first tell you a little about our students.

About 90% of our students enter our course because they want to be school teachers but have not met the minimum requirements to enter the Bachelor of Education (the remaining 10% want to become Early Childhood teachers, teachers’ aides, or are unsure of their plans). Many of them have experienced disrupted educational backgrounds. Due to family circumstances, migration, social environments, or disengagement, most of our students have had a negative or broken experience of schooling. Most are also the first in their family to attend university, and many speak English as an additional language (Gilmore, Welsh & Loton, 2018). Our course is a pathway into the Bachelor, depending on the students’ grades, and their success in a Federal government test of Literacy and Numeracy. Our first few classes focus on students’ motivations for doing the course. Overwhelmingly, they provide two main reasons they want to be teachers: to be the teacher they never had; or, to be the teacher they had once, who cast a light of inspiration across their lives (student reflections, 2017). Reading their reflections, in class discussions and activities, and in their ethnodrama, it is apparent that most of these students come with real strength in critiquing a system in which they had only limited success: they have the capacity to make insightful observations of a broken system that replicates itself. They come with the imagination for something better. They are excited by the idea that their actions as teachers can create change, and they are seeking a bridge between their identity as students and the agency and knowledge to act as teachers.

Students in this course are often initially resistant to risk-taking. Lack of experience in the Arts means that they don't feel confident they can get good grades in arts-based assessments. They would rather safely gain a pass, than take what they perceive as a high-stakes risk (student journals, 2016-2020). Consequently, the teachers in this unit are carefully selected. They are all arts practitioners as well as academics. They bring their arts practice to the classroom, explicitly modelling risk-taking in their teaching. Part of this is the process of releasing control to the students. It is important that the teachers work with the students in these classes, acknowledging that they are capable and can express their own stories and build their own narratives (Glarin, 2020). Teachers ask the students to share an aspect of their story that responds to the questions: why me? why here? why now? They step back as far as possible while students struggle, negotiate and massage a narrative into place. Sometimes this narrative is the development of a single story. More often, it is the conglomerate of several stories, built on common themes and tropes from within the class, and then reimagined into a dystopia, the future, a fictional location, or relational spaces. Nicholson calls this the triangulation between narratives of identity, of others, and of the drama itself (Nicholson, 2005). The teacher's job is to facilitate the unpacking and contextualising of students' narratives of life and learning, and to prompt and guide the making of these narratives into performance. Our underpinning philosophy as teachers comes from the work of Paolo Freire (1970), and we enact this through many strategies Boal developed for *Theatre of the Oppressed* (Boal, 1979). There are two major challenges. One lies in working with students enculturated to an education system where their 'success' is determined by their ranking against other students (Wright, 2015), and in which there is a separation of mind and body (Robinson, 2006). The other challenge concerns our practice as teachers. Nicholson (2005, p.70) observes that 'narrative structures of workshops are never innocent; they lead the participants' imaginative journey.' The tension between releasing creative control to students, and yet guiding them in the process, leads to ethical considerations of how far we are filtering or influencing their thinking, and what values we are transmitting through this process (Nicholson, 2005; Gallagher, 2014).

In order for students to embrace the making of the ethnodrama, they must be prepared to embody their narratives (Nicholson, 2005).

Consequently, we invite our students to explore the idea that learning that engages students in and through the body opens up possibilities for seeing the world differently; that embodied learning develops skills in problem solving, collaborative thinking and imagination. This unit is carefully scaffolded through games, activities, playing with ways of thinking and communicating, introducing learning theories, class conversations and debates on educational systems and processes, and experimentation with different theatre styles, with the aim of building critical thinking and performance skills sufficiently so that every student can be part of devising, and performing in, the ethnodrama. Early in the unit many students question the use of drama as a pedagogy. However, at the conclusion of the unit students fill in an anonymous, university organised, end of unit survey. In this survey, no student has ever said the unit or the final assessment—the ethnodrama performance—was a waste of time; no student has ever suggested a better way to do the unit. In their journals, every student has commented on the learning that emerged from the experience of the ethnodrama. Can it really be this good an experience? Are they just telling us what they think we want to hear?

PLAY AND PLAYING ROLE

To teach is to perform (Pineau, 2005; Falter, 2016); to perform in the world is to be an activist (Boal, 1998). With this understanding, and with the belief that all actions are political (Mouffe, 1992; Mouffe, Deutscher, Brandon & Keenan, 2001), we invite students to explore what political action means as a future teacher. We place emphasis on confronting the interconnected meanings of the word ‘active’. We invite our students to be ‘active’ in their learning. This is not only an intellectual process, but a physical one. We use embodied learning as our primary pedagogy (Darder, 2016). The students are asked to literally move into learning by ‘acting’, by ‘acting out’, and by being ‘active’ (McLaren & Welsh, 2020). To teach is also to engage politically —every choice as a teacher results in maintaining or challenging the status quo (Sachs, 2003). In the ethnodrama the students play a role; in the classroom they take on a role; as teachers they have a ‘role’ to play in shaping the future. In a previous article, the teaching team for this unit concluded that the students’ engagement in drama games and

their role-playing as students and professionals, facilitates their growing recognition of themselves in these roles, and supports them in finding their identities as learners and as future teachers (McLaren, Welsh & Long, 2020). If that is the case, how does it happen?

Gallagher (2014) argues that drama spaces allow 'for social relations to be reproduced, disrupted, suspended' (p. 119). She draws out the ways in which dramatic and improvisational work may bear a relationship to the social imaginary that 'challenges order' (p. 120). In drama classrooms, therefore, we might experience both the possible and real simultaneously, and work in the space that lies between the two, as a space of critique. Consistent with this thinking, we have purposefully designed this unit to challenge students to engage with learning at a profound, and what we hope will be, a transformative level. I acknowledge the difficulties of this word: 'transformational' (Gallagher, 2014; Balfour, 2009). Notwithstanding, our institution drives an explicitly transformational agenda (Dawkins, 2017). Our student cohort does not come from traditionally privileged groups, and this is particularly the case in this course. The university's 'transformational' claim stems from the provision of tertiary education opportunities for those students usually denied access due to socio-economic, cultural, and geographical restrictions, or due to their secondary school results. As participants in this 'transformational agenda', it is important that students understand the ways in which power works in educational constructs. This led us to use Boal's work as an underpinning for much of which we do in this unit. As arts practitioners as well as academics, the teachers in this unit share a belief system that values the arts. Our students, however, are not drama students, and many of them do not share this belief system. This establishes a potential clash of understandings of the nature and purpose of learning. We need, therefore, to foreground the work of the unit philosophically and also to build drama skills and understanding. We introduce the idea of the ethnodrama (Saldaña, 2016) early, and use Boal's *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* (1992) in every class. Each class begins with the invitation, 'Let's play'. We use play to develop skills and open conversations, although we do not begin devising the actual performance until just under half way through the unit. The first few sessions of the unit are often tough. In their journals, some students express confusion or concern: what is the point of this? As David writes, 'I really don't want to do this play. How does this help us

become a teacher?' (student reflection, 2018). They are inclined to wonder 'What on earth am I doing here?' or dismiss the learning activities as 'stupid' (Student journals, 2019). Play is, however, both serious and joyful; it is intrinsically driven; it is process rather than outcome focussed, and it involves active engagement (Rice, 2009). Once we reach adulthood we tend to dismiss play as the work of children; adult play is usually via sport or video gaming and is a distraction from 'real' life. In contrast, Boal knew that the way to self-discovery is through play (Boal, 1992). As we enter the middle sessions of the unit, the student engagement with play frequently changes: students begin to comment in their journals that through play they experience both flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014) and a sense of self actualisation (Maslow, 1943). Bill writes:

> Personally, I had a feeling of "self-actualisation" (Maslow 1943). I drew confidence from watching others perform and had a feeling of excitement prior to starting. I felt I came out of my shell a bit. (student reflection, 2018)

It is at this point, almost half way through the unit, that we shift from the concepts and content of the unit to the ways these might be explored and expressed through creating an ethnodrama, developed in groups, based on their educational stories.

In developing their ethnodrama, we encourage students to continue to 'play', and to experience the fluidity of the improvised playfulness they engaged in as children (Momeni, Khaki & Amini, 2017; Fleer, 2021). For many students there are two definable challenges: the first is uncertainty about purpose which results in hesitation; the second is a lack of confidence or experience in risk-taking, which results in resistance. We try to address these uncertainties and anxieties with clear explanations of our ideas and aims in inviting students to participate in play, in order to make a play. While this results in the students increasingly taking intellectual risks, the greater risk for many students is social. One particular student, Sally, summed this up, when she expressed concern about how she would look, and how she would be judged by her peers (student journal, 2018). The turning point for Sally came when she sat out to watch others, and she noticed that those students who committed to the process looked far less foolish (in her eyes) than those who did

not. She then pushed herself to commit to playing. She took a significant risk and allowed herself the freedom to fully engage. Her journal reflection on this moment of shift in her understanding indicates that for Sally the experience of playing, and of watching others play, was powerful in shifting her initial resistance to embodied learning. As the unit progressed, Sally explored the idea that learning comes from within the body (Nguyen & Larson, 2015), and that knowledge can be playfully built.

Over time, most students start to see the connections between playing and learning. We talk about what is learnt in our playing. We talk about 'playing a game'; 'playing a role.' We ask: what role will you play in the ethnodrama? What role will you play in this classroom, in your community, in the world?

In building the ethnodrama, we want our students to have theoretical understandings of what they are doing and why, in order to facilitate their sense of self and communal agency. We offer them a range of ways to make meaning in the context of their own lives, and in the context of the world. Through Drama we explore how educational paradigms are constructed, how their 'roles' within these paradigms have been constructed by others, and how they can reconstruct these roles through their actions. One of the most powerful classes introduces students to the work of Paolo Freire. We use Augusto Boal's image theatre (Boal, 1992) as a way into understanding key concepts of knowledge, privilege, democracy, education and opportunity. This two-hour class uses and teaches about constructivist orientations to learning (Bruner, 1996). The aim is to explore the knowledge individuals bring to class, and to acknowledge the knowledge of others by doing rather than by learning about. The purpose of the class is to provide an intellectual and dramatic basis to the work students will do in developing their ethnodrama. On the whole, these students have little experience of drama, and must learn the basic building blocks for making theatre. Their collective story must be uncovered, unveiled and untangled. It takes time to find this collective story in the body of the group.

TEACHING FREIRE

The lesson plan for our class exploring the underpinning concepts of Freire occurs early in the process of developing the ethnodrama. It

provides a jumping-off point for exploring ideas physically, working collaboratively, engaging with new or reconceived concepts, and beginning to work with dramatic skills. It highlights some of our practices in the classes for this unit. This class embraces the knowledge students carry in their bodies, and challenges them to take a chance, engage deeply with ideas, and explore concepts of identity, agency and process. I have chosen to outline this class here, because across the four years during which we gathered data, it was consistently the session in which students claimed to have changed their thinking. Almost all students identified this class as containing a moment where they began to understand both the concept of embodied learning, and the privilege embedded in our education system in Australia. The lesson outline looks like this:

Let's play!

Warm up game: mirror circle. Everyone in a circle. Each person looks at the person opposite to them and one to the right. Ask people to stand there and not move. However, if the person they are looking at does move, they must exactly copy what they see. It is important to watch very carefully and copy everything they see and hear. If they start to laugh, make sure the laughing is also copied. What happens: each action becomes accentuated as it passes around the circle.

Purpose: Observation, noticing change and exaggeration, no one has the power and yet everyone's role is critical—if someone isn't fully engaged, the whole thing ceases; engages the group as a whole.

Second game: group think—no talking. An object is called and everyone must contribute, without speaking to making a representation of that object. Objects: pineapple, gorilla, sailing ship, bunch of grapes

Purpose: working together; communicating without words; trusting each other; contributing in making something bigger

Key words for exploration: Opportunity, Knowledge, Privilege, Democracy, Education

Main activity one: The following is an extended activity to explore the meaning of the key words while also introducing image theatre as a teaching and learning strategy.

Circle images: Students in a circle, all facing out. Explain that this is so they can't easily see each other—the idea is to reduce their sense of inhibition about this because we are going to ask them to use their bodies to find meaning. Then ask students to find a pose in their bodies that says something about each of the key words.

Use image theatre strategies to explore each of the key words:

- How does this word make you feel? —use your body
- Think of a time when this word had specific meaning for you—use your body
- What does the secret part of me say or think about this? Show me in your body
- What do I believe about this? Show me in your body
- Find one position in your body that captures some or all of your feelings and thoughts about this word
- Move from the pose for one word to the pose for the next, as if this is a dance of these words.

This is about connecting experiences, feelings, inherited thinking and personal thinking in order to find meaning and understand how that has been constructed.

Move the class into five groups

Each group is given one of the key words to work on. They must devise a series of movements about their word—the aim is to really drill down into what these words mean. By students exploring the word in their bodies they will also discuss and contest their understandings of the word.

Ask them to talk about:

- the ways we use their word
- ways in which we enable or limit people by this word
- ways we apply this word.

After discussion and experimentation, each group shows an image (or a series of images) that captures the essence of the word. They 'perform' their images to the rest of the class.

Watchers (Boal's spect-actors) call out the images they see or words they think of as each group performs their image/images. They can walk around the images and see them from different angles. Initially, they are calling out only what they see. After these ideas run dry, they may also call out what they understand this image to mean. Write their words/interpretations on the board.

Only after all the observations have been made can the class ask the group performing to tell us what they understand the word to mean. This leads to discussion about the shades of meaning in the word.

We do this activity for each of the key words.

Purpose: for students to think more deeply about the meaning of the word; to experience affect in response to the word; to experience the body as the site of learning and as the site of knowledge; to stimulate discussion within new constructs for understanding; to purposefully break from traditional definitional understandings of these words; to equip students with an understanding of image theatre.

Connecting main ideas: Freire saw content transfer as oppressing citizens because it aims to maintain and sustain privilege. Freire's thinking can be summarised:

- students bring knowledge into the classroom from lived experiences
- students build knowledge together and connect it to world knowledge
- by acknowledging the two ideas above, oppression can be overcome
- knowledge is power (literacy is power), noting that knowledge is socially constructed so power is also socially constructed.

Main activity two: The following is to develop understanding on Freire, and to hear his words spoken aloud, with conviction, in the students' own voices.

Give students a collection of quotes from Freire's works (Lyons, 2001).

In small groups students find quotes from Freire connected to the key word they were exploring in activity one.

As a group, students devise a way to declare these words to the others in the class as if they are speaking to 1000 people and trying to win an election. The small group must make an image to support the words—placards can be used; any form of doing this is okay—one voice, many voices; one action, many actions—but it must include declaring the words and embodying the words.

Debrief: a conversation drawing out meaning and reflecting on the nature and purpose of the class

- What does it mean to know?
- How does enacting impact learning?
- How does embodying an idea influence our understanding of that idea?
- How does affect impact learning?
- Does acting something out give us control over its meaning? If so, how?
- What are the aesthetics of image theatre? How do bring aesthetics into our playing and learning?

The introduction to Freire, outlined above, gives students the opportunity to explore theoretical thinking through the body, while also synthesising, problem solving, contesting ideas, and creating. Students use language, but move beyond it, to mediating understanding through their bodies (Kang, Mehranian and Hyatt, 2017). This activity asks students to learn with, and through, the whole body, aware of the power of place, space and self. In doing so, it also challenges accepted ways of engaging with learning at university, and accepted views of what teaching and learning are. By the action of participation

in this class, students are at once learning about the underlying principles that maintain privilege, and challenging those same principles. They experience their capacity to change educational constructs through the process of doing in the class. The students take the learning from this class and apply it to their emerging ethnodrama —contemplating the social, educational and cultural structures that have supported and hindered their learning through life.

THE ETHNODRAMA

There are about 200 students, divided into eight classes, in each student cohort for this unit. Each class devises and develops their own ethnodrama based on the prompts: Why me? Why here? Why now? Through drama games, storytelling, story writing and improvisation over about 25 hours of classes, each class group discovers the common and distinctive elements of its story as a group, and of the stories of individuals within the group. The development of their stories as dramatic narrative is intertwined with an increasing awareness of learning theories. Such learning theory is introduced by teachers, but explored by students, through activities, conversation, self-observation, and metaphors (Tannehill & MacPhail, 2014). As they develop the story that underpins their ethnodrama, students often seek to express their meaning through symbol. As a teacher, I watch as they take ownership of ideas and weave and unweave narratives of empowerment and disempowerment. So doing, students begin to 'trespass' in the spaces of learning that have often previously been closed to them, or which they have previously rejected: personal agency in educational choices; images of themselves as capable learners; self-determination; and emotional responses to learning, to name a few. My observations, and my reading of student reflections, suggests that the interaction of this 'trespass', embodied learning, and critical thinking generates a new freedom in the way that students identify themselves as learners. It reminds me of Boal's words: 'If we do not trespass in this we can never be free' (Boal, 2008, p. xxii).

Aesthetics are also addressed as part of the process of communicating meaning. Sallis (2007) writes at length about the processes of developing an aesthetically pleasing ethnodrama, and we draw upon his thinking in working with our students. Consequently,

beautiful, and often deeply moving, stories emerge of the struggle to engage with education, the desire for learning, and the aspiration to bring about change in the world.

Towards the end of the unit a festival of ethnodrama occurs where each class performs their story to the other classes. For many students this is the first time performing before a large audience; for some students it is the first time performing in front of anyone at all. This movement into performative action appears to provide another critical moment for a shift in students' self-perceptions. While developing the ethnodrama, students tend to worry about narrative sense and the quality of their performance. They expect other groups to 'judge' them and they worry that they will not come up to standard. One of the students, Evan, writes in his journal, 'There was a general feel that "we weren't going to be as good" as some of the other classes' (student reflection, 2018). This is the uncertainty with which most students enter the performance of the ethnodrama. The true meaning-making for this experience occurs during the performance itself, when many students realise that their success in this task is reliant on collaboration, and that the stories of different groups are not in competition, but together form a narrative of identity. David, who is quoted above questioning the purpose of the play, concludes his reflections, after the performance, with a very different mindset:

> All our dreams link together and it was great to see how many people share the same goal; we might not all want to teach the same subject or teach at the same school, but we all want to educate the future generations. (student reflection, 2018)

He identifies what we might call a 'community of practice' (Williams, 2013) that has been developed through the ethnodrama process. This is a space of shared ideas, enacted and critiqued, in the process of shared doing. In this, David demonstrates a shift from the idea of students being in competition with each other, or judging each other, to sharing values and aspirations. Moreover, he identifies the way in which shared goals and values create bonds that support embodied learning, and the individual empowerment that results (Pettit, 2019).

Analysis of student journals tells us that the doing of the ethnodrama simultaneously enacts learnings about collaboration, and creates a shift in students' understandings of their own experiences.

The students use a range of vocabulary and expressions to describe this shift—but the sense is clear: they are identifying something in the doing of the performance which marks a change in their sense of self as both learner and social being. The acting of the play becomes part of the change these students aspire to. After the performance students articulate the experience as one of empowerment and agency derived from the engagement of the body in action. Overcoming fear is a significant part of this. Emma writes:

> I also think that it helped me that when I saw the other people performing then I was just like "I can do it" and you need to do it because if you want to become a teacher then you would have to leave the fear of talking in front of a lot of people. (student reflection, 2018)

Emma took confidence from watching others; their risk-taking provided her with some impetus to shift in her sense of identity from student-doing-a-play to teacher-who-needs-to-talk-in-front-of-others.

Shelley writes about her feelings prior to the performance:

> The performance was really daunting…. Everyone was feeling really nervous about performing in front of 200 people.

However, her journal entry after the performance concludes:

> Coming off stage from the performance I felt great. I was relieved and really proud that we were able to come together as a group and give it our best. It was a great reflection of who we are as a group. (student reflection, 2018)

I find it interesting that Shelley's reflection here does not focus on her personal performance, but on the performance of the group. In contrast, Miriam takes this lesson very personally:

> Being a part of this play allowed me to have some personal control and boosted my intrinsic motivation to embrace my overall learning. (student reflection, 2018)

She identifies agency and empowerment as significant outcomes of

the play experience for her.

As a teacher guiding students through this process of playing, exploration, and community building, to performance, I see the most important skill developed through 'playing' as the capacity to improvise: to listen to and connect with others; to be responsive; and to direct action through interaction, rather than to be submissive to an imposed action. These are also themes that the students pick up. However, the most broadly expressed value from the play, according to the students, is the sense of belonging, and the creation of shared identity that emerges from it.

CONCLUSION

The question of whether, and how, change occurs, is fraught. As teachers our aim is to introduce students to university study and challenge their expectations of what Education is. We articulate that the unit is designed to support them to become more confident as learners, and to challenge some of their ideas of how learning occurs. Snyder-Young questions the degree of change that can take place in response to theatre experiences, writing that 'Mainstream culture is bigger and more powerful than theatre' (Snyder-Young, 2013, p.136). As teachers we do not indicate that 'change' is an aim or an outcome of their participation. Nonetheless, students tell us in their journals that they have experienced 'change' (frequently they call this 'growth') through the process of doing the play. They talk about observing changes in themselves around confidence, self-awareness, empathy, a sense of belonging, and an understanding of collaboration. For these students, the change they report is within themselves, in terms of confidence and their interface with educational structures, systems and ideas. This change is both personal and collaborative. It does not change the world; but it may change the individual student's engagement with their world—the way they connect with, critique and challenge the systems in which they operate. When the students position themselves within the storytelling, they appear to confront, change, or expand their narratives of themselves as learners. Whether or not this is 'transformation' can be debated. However, it does appear to be the 'small change' that Balfour speaks about (Balfour, 2009). They use action as a way of developing or expressing insight. By acting together in the creation of drama, students experience

themselves as enacting change, and alter the self-narratives with which they have entered the course.

The uniformity of student responses across many classes and several years is striking. Perhaps they are responding to the ways we have framed reflective prompts and the values we bring to the classroom. Mindful of this, we locate the reflective process within a democratic educational context; we have increasingly tried to be explicit in seeking their engaged responses to the experience, not an answer that they think we want to hear. If they are humouring us in their responses, they are doing it in a remarkably organised way. The movement from resistance, hesitation, struggle to commit, and then involvement is replicated in many students' accounts of their experiences. They acknowledge with stark honesty that they are not actors, and yet they claim that the action of performance makes them actors for this brief period. Moreover, they claim that the performance of the drama is an acting out of the change they seek to make. The action of doing transforms the 'actor' into the message bearer and change-maker. There seems to be something rich and significant in the quality of experience shared by these students which allows them to feel equipped as students and future teachers. Notably, this sense of confidence in their capacity continues through this course. The 2020 Student Experience Survey, a national survey conducted by the Australian Federal government, found that 92% of students completing the diploma claimed to be satisfied or extremely satisfied with the quality of their teaching and learning experiences (QILT, 2020).

A consistent theme in students' journals and reflections is the students' aspiration, when teachers, to bring about major change. A large majority of students want to change schooling from what they experienced to something better, something that genuinely caters for all children, that does not pigeonhole, label or discard the young people in our communities (student reflections, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019). It requires imagination to picture an education system which is based on democratic power structures rather than authoritarian structures (Pearl and Knight, 1999); one which creates a just future, rather than one which replicates the injustices of privilege and power that exist in schools today (Smyth, 2012). Creating their ethnodrama is not a rehearsal for the revolution (Boal, 1979), but carries in it the seed of the revolution itself. By the action of doing the ethnodrama, the students find themselves changed, they see themselves differently, are

prepared to take on new 'roles', and are ready to 'act' differently. Boal's observation (1992, p.160) that theatre 'can help us build our future instead of just waiting for it' may align to what is happening here. Although Snyder-Young's claim that 'applied theatre projects do not always resist dominant power structures' (p. 137) may provide a counter-balance to Boal's optimism, we must not underestimate the students' capacity to understand the dynamics of power in which they operate. Students know that they are engaging with dominant power structures as students, and that they will continue to do so as teachers. They cannot individually reframe socially embedded educational values. What they claim emerges from the experience of the ethnodrama is a way to understand themselves within these dominant power structures; to critique these structures; and to locate themselves as both learners and teachers within them. In other words, they are developing an understanding of both the real and the possible, and experiencing a pedagogy of possibility (Giroux and Simon, 1988). Our teaching in the Diploma, through the development of the ethnodrama performance, invites our students to take back their power, to empower themselves, and as powerful people, to work toward changes to support equity and opportunity in education.

SUGGESTED CITATION

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